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To, Mrs. Richard J. Feltner

From

A. H. Keller.







**A HISTORY**  
of the  
**ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE**  
of the  
**CHURCH OF THE**  
**UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST**

by  
**C. H. KELLER, B. D., Ph. D.**

including  
**ILLUSTRATED MAPS AND CHARTS.**

**1943**

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# Dedication

With sincere appreciation to the thoughtfulness of the wife and children who so graciously shared the time of "father" with the countless manuscripts, books, cemeteries, buildings, and libraries, the author humbly dedicates this History of the Allegheny Conference.



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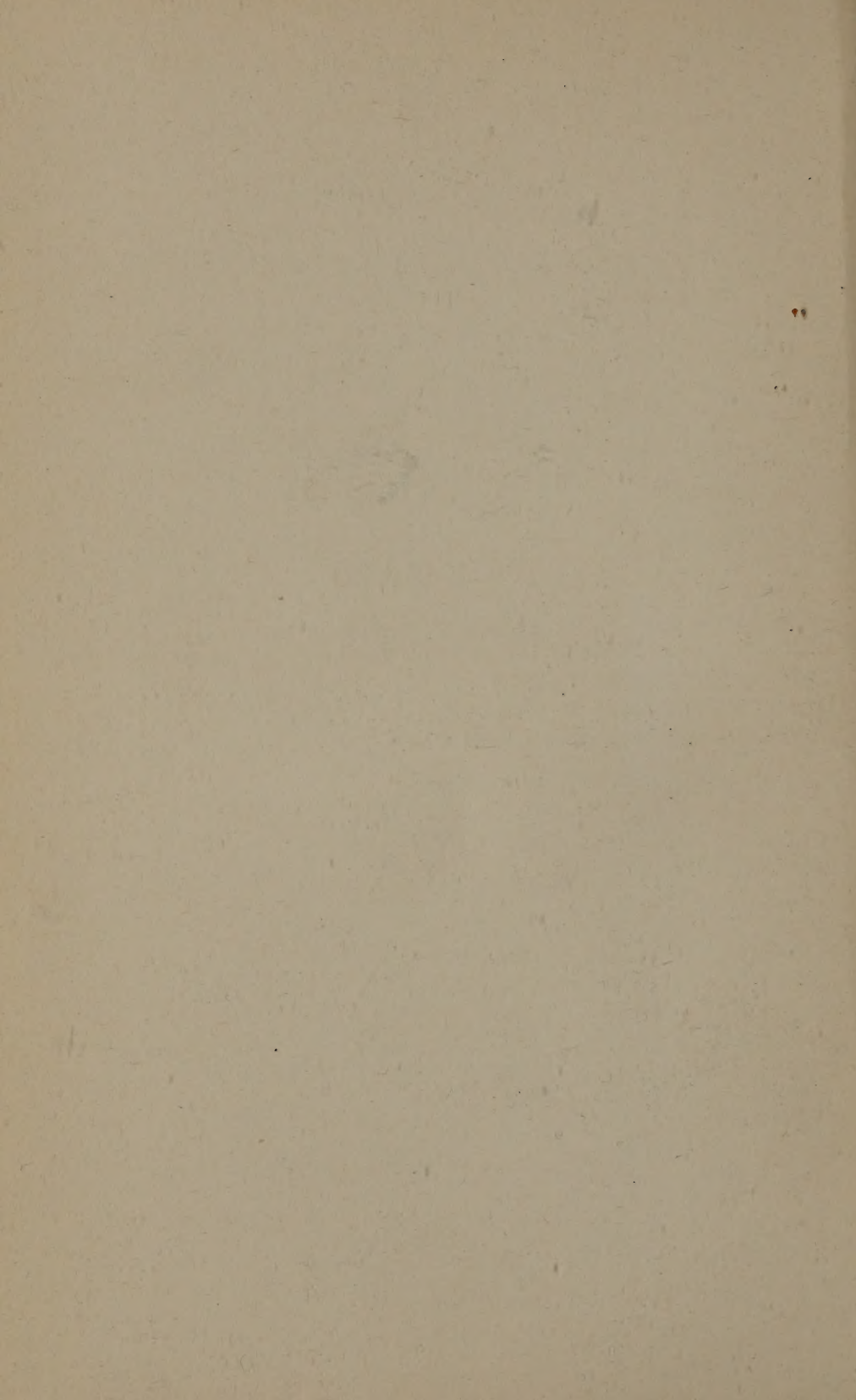
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# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I

For many years the writer has been keenly interested in the history of his church denomination. Dr. A. W. Drury, who was the teacher of United Brethren Church History at the time of the writer's student days at Bonebrake Theological Seminary, increased his interest in denominational history by constant reference to the early influence of Allegheny Conference. As a result of this challenge to think historically, the writer asked for the privilege of presenting as his Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, a study of the rise and development of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. After a thorough investigation on the part of the writer of the materials available and of the scope of the field, and a subsequent interview with Dr. P. S. Franklin of the Department of Religion of the University of Pittsburgh, permission was granted to pursue this study in research.

Most interesting to the writer have been the constant changes in social customs that have occurred during the development of the Allegheny Conference. Attitudes toward the use of spirituous liquors, tobacco, secret fraternities, music, and many other issues are not only vital to the members of our Conference, but interesting and oft times amusing to both laity and ministry alike. One wonders what the historian of the twenty-first century will think as he studies the life and customs of us who represent the Church in 1943.

## The UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

The purpose of the present study is to trace the development of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ beginning with the coming of the so-called Otterbein Movement to central and western Pennsylvania to the present. The major emphasis will be placed upon the work of the organized Conference which came into being in, 1838.

As the work of gathering materials progressed, the writer received increasing evidence that to write a history of all the various movements within the Conference would be utterly impossible. The development of such organizations and movements as the Sunday School, the Christian Endeavor, the Missionary organizations including the women's auxiliary organizations known as the "Women's Missionary Society" and the "Otterbein Guild," and the Leadership Education movement would furnish individually enough materials for as large and exhaustive a study as does this history of the Allegheny Conference itself.

Many of our local churches have abundant materials from which to draw in the developing of local church histories. It is not the purpose of this work to record the history of individual churches except in such cases where so doing will add to a better understanding of the Conference. The **Telescope** files are so full of local church reference that if a member of one of our traditional churches were so inclined, he could build a major historical account of the life and progress of his own local church from this one source alone.

Because of the fluid state of our settlements in the early days of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, there are many important men whose value to the Denominational Church in later years was outstanding, and yet they were men who had no active connection with Allegheny Conference. Of these men



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there will naturally be little reference in this history. We will illustrate by giving one outstanding example:

Bishop William Hanby, the father of Benjamin Hanby, known chiefly for his immortal song **Darling Nellie Grey**, was born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 8th, 1808. William Hanby was the son of poor parents, and at the age of seventeen was apprenticed to a saddle maker for a term of five years. He was so brutally treated that after three years he ran away to Ohio. Here he was converted in 1830, and licensed to preach by the Scioto Conference in 1831. In 1833 he was given his first charge, a circuit composed of some 28 appointments. In 1839 he was made editor of the **Religious Telescope** and in 1845 was elected to the highest office of the Church, that of Bishop.<sup>1</sup>

The territory now known as the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ was originally a part of the old Hagerstown Conference. At the General Conference in 1817 the two western Pennsylvania counties, namely, Westmoreland and Washington, were made a part of the newly organized Muskingum Conference, with the eastern section remaining in the Hagerstown Conference.<sup>2</sup> However, at the General Conference of 1829, the Hagerstown Conference was ordered divided into the Harrisburg (later Pennsylvania) Conference and the Hagerstown (later Virginia) Conference. In March, 1830, the old Hagerstown Conference met together for the last time, and the Harrisburg Conference was ordered to secure a

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 430, Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press (1924).

2. Drury, A. W., **Minutes of the Annual and General Conferences 1800-1818**, p. 90, United Brethren Publishing House (1897).

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new Protocol or Minutes Book. "Love and unity rules this Conference" wrote the secretary.<sup>1</sup> In 1833 the two western counties were united with the newly formed Pennsylvania Conference, and remained with it until the final separation of the Allegheny Conference from the Pennsylvania Conference in 1838.<sup>2</sup> From that date on there have been only minor changes made in the Conference boundaries.

It shall be the purpose of the writer to note the history and the background of the church of the United Brethren in Christ in general and of the territory now allocated to the Allegheny Conference in particular. To this end the two succeeding chapters of this treatment are devoted to the early growth in the territory now known as Allegheny Conference in the years preceding 1838. The later chapters deal with the Allegheny Conference from the date of its organization until the publication of the Conference Minutes of September 16-20, 1942, which publication occurred in November, 1942.

1. Lawrence, John, **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 206, Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing Establishment (1860).

2. **Religious Telescope**, May 30, 1838.



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The Church is very fortunate in having primary source materials available for all of her history as far back as 1795, and for much of the opening period of 1767 c. – 1800.

Dr. A. W. Drury's **William Otterbein** gives a complete account of the life of the father of the United Brethren Church based entirely on primary source materials. Other such historical documents, such as the Baltimore Church Book which gave a complete statement as to doctrine and policy of the early Otterbein movement, have been preserved through the writings of the first church historian, Henry G. Spayth.

The Journal of Christian Newcomer, a diary of his life and work in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, has become invaluable as a primary source to our knowledge of the early church beginnings. It was first published as **Newcomers Journal**, translated by John Hildt. In 1941 Dr. S. S. Hough of the Allegheny Conference published another account of the diary after first doing prolific research work in locating the various places mentioned in the Journal. The title of the book published by Dr. Hough is **Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements**.

Most of the early Conference minutes preceding the formation of Allegheny Conference are still in existence, and can be found in the Library at Bonebrake Theological Seminary. All of the Allegheny Conference and General Conference minutes are available from the date of organization, either through the files of the **Religious Telescope** or from the records of the Conference library, now carefully preserved by Mr. Homer Ruth of Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

Fortunately for the Allegheny Conference, the **Religious Telescope** was founded more than three years before the birth of the Conference, and as a result it contains a complete record of the work of that

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body from the date of its organization.

Many pamphlets and books written in autobiographical form give other valuable aids as primary source material, making possible a minute analysis of the work of Allegheny Conference.

Secondary source materials, such as the four histories of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ written successively by Spayth and Hanby, Lawrence, Berger, and Drury, and a former Conference history by Dr. J. S. Fulton have also aided much in organizing the materials.

All of these materials were carefully read and studied by the writer in preparation for the writing of this dissertation.



## CHAPTER II

### UNITED BRETHRENISM BEFORE 1800

Pennsylvania is the mother state of the so-called Otterbein movement that was later to develop into the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

American history records the fact that the United States was in reality born on Pennsylvania soil. In Philadelphia the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Treaty of Peace ending the Revolutionary War ratified, the Articles of Confederation adopted, and the Constitution of the United States of America formulated.<sup>1</sup>

United Brethren Church history points back to the evening of July the 27th, 1752, when Philip William Otterbein landed on American soil, proceeding immediately to Lancaster where he became pastor of the German Reformed Church of that city in the month of August, 1752. Martin Boehm, co-founder of the United Brethren movement, was born near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, November 30th, 1725. The immortal meeting at Isaac Long's barn occurred in 1767 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The first General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ was held at Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, in the year 1815. Mt. Pleasant is located in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and is today included within the bounds of the Allegheny Conference.

Louis the XIV, of France, who was the dominant ruler of Europe began a systematic persecution of the various Protestant groups of Europe during the latter part of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Huguenots of France, the Protestants of the Neth-

1. **Pennsylvania Manual**, p. 237, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1927).

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erlands, and of the Palatinate, were all subjected to persecution, and to the devastation of their lands.

Three times, in 1674, 1688 and 1693, the Palatinate was devastated, and the German Protestants forced to seek other homes. In Switzerland the Mennonites were persecuted by both Catholics and members of the Reformed Churches, and forced to flee to other countries for refuge. Holland became the dominant hope of both these groups, and from that friendly haven of refuge the German refugees sought new lands where they might settle and live and worship in peace.

In spite of the friendly invitation of William Penn to the Germans, it appears that only about 200 families arrived on our shores between the years 1682 and 1702. However by 1727, forty or fifty thousand had arrived, and by 1751 it was estimated that there were 90,000 Germans in Pennsylvania, of whom 30,000 were attached to the Reformed Church.<sup>1</sup>

The section of Pennsylvania that gave birth to the United Brethren movement, namely, Lebanon, Berks and Lancaster Counties, was settled by two divergent groups of German settlers. First, there were those who came to this "Early Frontier" section of Pennsylvania as European refugees. Secondly, there was a far more numerous group that had settled in the State of New York in 1710 at the invitation of Queen Anne. This group had settled down to clearing and possessing their lands in the territory west of Albany, only to have the Dutch expel them through a legal technicality. Thus in 1723 they again found themselves "on the march" through the wilderness in search of a land free from the persecution of their fellowmen. They moved westward to the Susquehanna River, con-

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 53, Dayton, Ohio: The Otterbein Press (1924).



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structed some crude canoes, and started their southward journey that was concluded after many hardships by their arrival in the Tulpehocken Country. This wild country had not yet been purchased from the proprietary government, but nine years later this purchase was completed and the new settlement formally established. Prominent among this group was Martin Batdorf, a direct ancestor of our present Bishop of the eastern area of our Church, Grant D. Batdorf.

Other groups of these German immigrants went on south into Maryland and Virginia, thus laying the basis for the early boundaries of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Thirty years later the German settlements found themselves destitute of ministerial and educational leadership. The German people themselves were unable to help their brethren in far off America because of their own poverty and distress. But in this trying hour the synods of North and South Holland sent Rev. Michael Schlatter, of St. Gall, Switzerland, as a missionary to the German Reformed emigrants in Pennsylvania. The year was 1746, and in the first year of his labors he came to Tulpehocken with two other ministers and preached to a large congregation. It was said that people "Could not conceal their exceeding joy and surprise at seeing three ministers together at one time."<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Schlatter was a man full of enthusiasm and interest in the work of evangelizing and organizing the German emigrants. He had a keen vision of the future of America, and felt that the dominant tongue of the new empire would be English. With this in mind he advocated throughout his lifetime the teaching of English, especially to the children in the German parochial school system.

In the early days of his ministry among the Amer-

1. Drury, A. W., *Op. cit.*, p. 68

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ican Colonies, Michael Schlatter made extensive missionary tours throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey. During these tours he organized 46 churches and divided these among 16 charges. With this work completed, he found that in all this wide range of territory he had but four ordained ministers to supervise the spiritual development of the German Reformed fellowship of America. Less than one minister among ten thousand widely separated, spiritually hungry, emigrants, who were in America for the avowed purpose of worshipping their God, and of training their children in the knowledge of their faith, was available.

The early American minister of the middle colonies had a twofold duty to his community. He was not only the head of the local church, but in most cases the leading educator as well. This was especially true among the Germans, because of the influence of Martin Luther in building the educational system of Germany about the Church and its ministry.

Rev. Schlatter realized only too well the poverty and scarcity of educational and religious leadership of those tens of thousands of Germans under his spiritual direction. Determined to do all in his power to rectify the situation, he made the perilous journey back to Holland and presented his case to the Classis of Amsterdam, to which had been committed the supervision of both the Dutch and the German work in America, and ask for further assistance in both missionaries and money.

His petition was granted and Schlatter was sent on to Germany and Switzerland to secure the much needed cooperation. He presented himself to Herborn Academy and here he secured six young ministers, among them Philip William Otterbein, who will be presented more fully to the reader later. This little



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party of highly expectant missionaries arrived in New York Harbor on the twenty-eighth of July, 1752, after an ocean voyage of nearly four months. Otterbein was immediately called to the Lancaster appointment. His leadership is noted from the records of the Lancaster School Board of 1754, which lists the name of Mr. Otterbein as one of the directors.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after his return to America, Mr. Schlatter decided to devote his entire time to the educational growth and development of the German youth. With this in mind he returned to Holland in 1753 in search of teachers to "instruct youth in English Language and common principles."<sup>2</sup> He came back in 1754 to become the superintendent of the English-German section of the schools in Pennsylvania, thus becoming the first superintendent of schools in America.<sup>3</sup> This educational movement had splendid cooperation from the German Lutheran and German Reformed Churches but was bitterly opposed by the Quietist groups, including the Mennonites, Moravians and Dunkards. These groups were determined to hold fast to their own language and customs, and to this day they show the effect of this early determination.

At the outbreak of the French and Indian War, Rev. Schlatter joined the Colonial forces as a Chaplain, and again served in the same capacity with the patriot forces in the War of the Revolution. His eventful and courageous life came to a close in the year 1790. He was a man who had seen the future of the New World with a far keener vision than it is the privilege for most men to see. He was a man passionately interested in

1. Wickersham, James P., **History of Education in Pennsylvania**: p. 70, Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Unguier Printing Company (1885).
2. Wickersham, James P., **op. cit.**, p. 65.
3. Eby, Frederick and Arrowood, Charles Flinn, **The Development of Modern Education**, p. 341, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. (1940).

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the spiritual life of his compatriots and devoutly consecrated to the task of educating the youth of the German emigrants for their life in a new English speaking world.

We now turn back to examine more minutely the life and background of the most outstanding member of that small group of six ministers who came to America as missionaries at the request of Michael Schlatter, Philip William Otterbein.

Rev. Otterbein was born in Dillenburg, Germany, June 3, 1726. His father, John Daniel Otterbein, studied at Herborn and became a candidate for the ministry in 1718. In 1719, he became a teacher in the Reformed Latin School of Dillenburg, of which he soon afterward became rector.<sup>1</sup> In 1728, he became the pastor of the Frohnhausen and Wissenbach Churches, moving to the former location. Here he remained as pastor until his death on November 14th, 1742.

The mother of Philip William Otterbein was Wilhelmina Henrietta Hoerlen Otterbein. Her abiding faith in God enabled her to continue the education of her children after the death of the father. With foresight and sacrificial determination she moved to Herborn where she could educate her sons at less expense. Of the seven children who lived to maturity, three others having died in infancy and youth, the six boys all were educated and trained for the ministry and the daughter was married to a minister. Philip William Otterbein was the second eldest surviving son. His twin sister, Anna Maragret, died in infancy.

The family unity of the Otterbeins is especially touching. John Henry, the eldest son, was the first to graduate from Herborn. He immediately received a charge that paid about half the salary his father had received. This was added to the family budget until the

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 30.

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graduation of Philip William. At this time John Henry received a parish, and for the next six years Philip William assisted in supporting the family and aiding in the education of the remaining four brothers. Following the call of Philip William to the mission field, the third brother, now graduated, completed the financing of the education of the rest of the family.

It was a fearless young giant that entered the ministry of the German Reformed Church following his ordination on the thirteenth of June, 1749. Standing well over six feet in height, powerfully built, Otterbein became a crusader for righteousness from the very moment of his ordination. Henry G. Spayth in his **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, says:

The zeal, the devotion, the earnestness, with which he met these new duties surprised his friends and astonished his hearers. In reproof he spared neither rank nor class. . . . While some approved and encouraged the young preacher, others would say, 'No! Such a sermon, such burning words from so young a minister! To be reproved, admonished, and exorted by him,!! and in such a way! What does he mean by faith? justification by faith? Does he mean that we are not Christians? Oh!!'1

Spayth later says:

To these Mr. Otterbein paid no attention at the time; the rather he waxed stronger in spirit and love of preaching Christ. Under preaching some wept in silence till he himself could scarce suppress a tear. This increa-

1. Spayth, Henry G., and Hanby, William, **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 21, Circleville, Ohio: Conference Office of the United Brethren in Christ (1851).



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sed the opposition, and the authorities were privately solicited to arrest his preaching for a season. 'Ah,' said his beloved mother, 'I expected this and give you joy. This place is too narrow for you my son; they will not receive you here, you will find your work elsewhere.' She was often heard to say, 'My William will have to be a missionary, he is so frank, so open, so natural, so prophet like.' 'But missionary where? To what land, what people, mother, shall I go?' 'Oh,' she would reply, 'be patient, preach us another sermon,-will wait (we'll wait) the Lord's time.' And it came sooner than they could have wished.<sup>1</sup>

When Michael Schlatter issued the call for missionaries to Pennsylvania, it came as a divine appeal to the heart of Philip William Otterbein. He was eager to go and made instant arrangements. When the hour of leaving came, his mother hastened to her closet, and after being relieved by tears and prayers, she came from her chamber strengthened, and taking William by the hand and pressing that hand to her bosom, she said, "Go, the Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord cause his face to shine upon thee, and with much grace direct thy steps. On earth, I may not see thy face again, after we part,—but go."<sup>2</sup>

Four months later he arrived at New York and proceeded immediately to the town of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he became pastor of the Lancaster German Reformed Church, largest Reformed Church west of Philadelphia.

It is not the aim of this history to follow minutely the life of Philip William Otterbein. For those who desire a more complete biography of his life, the book

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

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**William Otterbein** by A. W. Drury is recommended. For our own purpose it will be sufficient to mention that Otterbein's pastorates covered the following: Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1752-1758; Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, (now Myerstown), 1758-1760; Frederick, Maryland, 1760-1765; York, Pennsylvania, 1765-1774; and Baltimore, Maryland, 1774-1813.

In all of these pastorates he took a deep interest in both the physical and spiritual aspects of church life. He completed new church buildings at all of his pastorates with the exception of Tulpehocken. Here the church had been dedicated only 13 years before the coming of Otterbein, and was maintained in an excellent state of repair.

His frank, open attitude in facing the spiritual problems of the church in his day resulted on several occasions in his being locked out of the church building. On these occasions he would take a stand upon one of the tomb stones and proceed with an out-of-doors service. On one occasion in Frederick the doors of his church were locked against him and some of his membership suggested forcing the door. Instead Otterbein calmly took his stand on a nearby tombstone and concluded a passionate message. On the following Sunday he again appeared and was about to open the services on the outside of the church, when the person having the keys came and opened the door saying as he did so, "Come in, come in! I can stand this no longer."<sup>1</sup>

It was during Otterbein's pastorate at York that an event took place which was of historic importance, and was to culminate finally in the organization of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

The German Reformed Congregation in America was very similar to that of the mother country in so much as it was formal in its organization and in its

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 80.

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worship. In fact, Otterbein had always been radical in the eyes of his Reformed brethren, because of his advocating prayer services and other non-ritualistic forms of worship. The Reformed Church was Calvinistic in its theology. Yet Otterbein in drawing up the "Church Book" of the Baltimore Church on the fourth of May, 1774, had inscribed in the thirteenth article these words: "No preacher can stay among us who teaches the doctrine of predestination."<sup>1</sup> It would seem then that Otterbein had even in the early days of his ministry refuted the doctrinal tenets of the Reformed Church.

On the other hand, the Quietestic groups of Pennsylvania were Arminian in background. Because of the different theological background of the two groups there was little cooperation or even good will expressed between them.

One of the Mennonite ministers, Martin Boehm by name, had come into contact with a great spiritual awakening. He was affected so emotionally by this new experience that he became a flaming evangelist. The Mennonites were no more ready for this new expression of religion than had been the Reformed churchmen to accept the spiritual conceptions of Otterbein. Both churches had become lost in the formalism of their day. As a result of his enthusiastic evangelistic preaching, Martin Boehm found himself in later years expelled from the Mennonite congregation.

In 1767, Boehm in the company of some "Virginia Preachers," was holding "Great Meetings" throughout Lancaster County. One of these appointments was at the barn of Isaac Long. The gathering was so large that an overflow meeting was held outside in the orchard with one of the Virginia preachers doing the speaking.

1. Spayth, Henry G., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 51.



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Mr. Otterbein was present at the meeting and was thrilled to hear Mr. Boehm relate a Christian experience and faith that was similar to his own. At the close of the service he came forward and clasping Boehm in his arms, he cried out, "Wir sind Bruder!" (We are brethren!) It was a thrilling sight to the hundreds gathered at the service to see the powerfully built Mr. Otterbein representing the Reformed Movement embrace the smaller Mr. Boehm, representative of the Mennonite fellowship on this historic occasion. While in it they saw a sympathetic understanding on the part of representatives of two religious bodies, they could not foresee the formation of a denomination that was to number 450,000 souls within the next 176 years.

This meeting had taken place on Pentecost, or, using the old expression, at Whitsuntide. In recent years the denomination has observed United Brethren Day on the Day of Pentecost.

There was then no thought of the formation of another denomination. The only impulse that motivated Mr. Otterbein and Mr. Boehm was the impulse of love, and the determination that the German people of the new world would have an evangelistic gospel preached to them.

Otterbein was always the dynamic force that led others in their quest for souls. In the early days the converts to this evangelistic preaching were known as Otterbein's People. In spite of the fact that Mr. Otterbein was an assigned pastor all the days of his American ministry, he made countless evangelistic trips throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, preaching with unabated ardor. Of his preaching ability all the church leaders of his day testify. The following testimonies by Christian Newcomer give an interesting picture of the power of his preaching:

June 4th, 1797. This forenoon William Otterbein preached from Ephesians 2:1-6. O

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how conclusively did he reason! How he endeavored to persuade his hearers to work out the salvation of their souls! How he tried to convince all of the necessity of vital, experimental religion and a thorough change of heart! The congregation was unusually large, and all seemed to pay profound attention. Poor unworthy me had to exhort after him; then Otterbein and Geeting administered the Lord's supper; and Br. Troxel preached in the afternoon...

September 25th, 1801. Father Otterbein preached with uncommon perspicuity and power. The force with which he pointed out the greatness, the importance, and the responsibility of the ministerial office, will never be forgotten by me. I trust the impressions made on my heart will abide with me as long as life shall last.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. John Hildt, the translator of Newcomer's Journal, wrote concerning his own first impressions of Otterbein, and of his resultant conversion, as follows:

"I shall never forget the impression made upon my mind when I first saw Otterbein. It was a Good Friday, in the forenoon, when, by the persuasion of a friend, I entered the church where he officiated. A venerable, portly old man, above six feet in height, erect in posture, apparently about seventy-five years of age, stood before me. He had a remarkably high and prominent forehead. Gray hair fell smoothly down both sides of his temples; and his eyes were large, blue, and piercing, and sparkling with fire which

1. Hough, Samuel S., **Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements**, pp. 23-56, Dayton, Ohio: Otterbein Press (1941).

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warmed the heart. In his appearance and manners there was nothing repulsive, but all was attractive, and calculated to command the most profound attention and reverence. He opened his lips in prayer to Jehovah. Oh, what a voice! What a prayer! Every word thrilled my heart. I had heard many prayers, but never one like this. The words of his text were these: 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' As he proceeded in the elucidation of the text and its application, it seemed that every word was exactly adapted to my case, and intended for me. A tremor at length seized on my whole frame; tears streamed from my eyes; and, utterly unable to restrain myself, I cried aloud.<sup>1</sup>

As time passed and the preaching appointments increased in number and in strength, it became necessary to form some organization to care in a systematic way for this growing spirit of evangelism among the German people of the middle states. During Otterbein's pastorate at Baltimore, Maryland, he was instrumental in providing for a "Church Book" in which were stated the rules that were to govern the local congregation. It was made a permanent record in 1785. Prominent among these regulations was the stipulation that "No preacher can stay among us who will not, to the best of his ability, care for the various Churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, which Churches under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us."

1. Religious Telescope, June 13, 1942.



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This mention of the Otterbein movement in 1785 is the first official recognition given to the existence of an organized movement for the propagation of the gospel among the German peoples not served by other church organizations. It was not, however, the actual recognition of a new church. Instead it was the recognition of a growing need on the part of the German settlers for the Gospel, a need that could only be met through the untiring efforts of the Otterbein movement.

By 1789 it was felt that the time had arrived for the holding of a conference of the ministers now serving these churches. The conference was held in Baltimore at the parsonage of Mr. Otterbein. Its purpose was, according to the discipline of 1815, "To hold a conference with all the preachers to take into consideration in what manner they might be most useful." In this conference there was no record made of either the number of church organizations or the number of members. This was due to a feeling on the part of the early Church that God did not look favorably upon the numbering of His people.

Those present at this first Conference of the Church were:

William Otterbein	Christian Newcomer
Martin Boehm	Adam Lehman
Henry Weidner	John Enrst
George A. Guething	

Those absent from the Conference were:

Benedict Swoap	Martin Kreider
Henry Baker	Christopher Grosh
Simon Herre	Abraham Draksel <sup>1</sup>
Frederick Schaffer	

It is interesting to note that the first Conference of

1. Spayth, Henry G., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 59.

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the Church of the United Brethren in Christ occurred in the same year that witnessed the inauguration of President Washington as the first President of the United States of America.

The second Conference convened in 1791 in Paradise Township in York County, Pennsylvania, at the house of a Mr. Spangler. J. G. Pfrimmer, who later moved to the western part of Pennsylvania, was present at this Conference.

In the year 1800 the first regular conference was held at the home of Frederick Kemp in Frederick County, Maryland. It was at this meeting that Otterbein and Boehm were elected the first Bishops of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The name of the new denominational Church was also officially set at this Conference. Until this time the denomination had been known variously as Otterbein's People, The Liberty People, The New Reformed, The New Mennonites, Boehm's Followers, Light's People etc.<sup>1</sup>

This Conference closed an era of unorganized Christian service under the untiring leadership of Philip William Otterbein. Perhaps the word unorganized is ill chosen, for there was a loose organization that tended to the preaching appointments of "Otterbein's People." But from the date 1800 on, the Church was officially the "Church of the United Brethren in Christ" and its new government and discipline began to take form.

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 265.

Figure 1.  
 Preaching Appointments of the United Brethren Church in  
 Allegheny Conference Territory by 1800.

Altoona and Pittsburgh are used only for location.  
 There were no preaching appointments there at that time.  
 Eastern section shows location of Otterbein's Parishes.





## Chapter III

### BACKGROUNDS OF ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

1800 - 1838

To understand the early development of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in Allegheny Conference territory, it is necessary first to understand the political background of our nation at the time.

In the days of the French and Indian War (1754-1763) Fort Duquesne, later renamed Fort Pitt, was one of the outstanding strategic points desired by both the French and the English. Situated at the "Point," where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the Ohio, it was at once the outpost that guarded the eastern boundary of the French territory of Louisiana, and the chief obstacle to the western expansion of the English.

The defeat of General Braddock by the French and Indians in 1755 opened the whole of Western Pennsylvania to raiding Indians, who burned and destroyed the settlements of the English as far east as the Susquehanna River. Defeat and failure followed the cause of the British until the year 1758, when Fort Duquesne was taken. From that time on success followed the English and American arms and in 1763 the Treaty of Paris was concluded which stipulated that France give to England all the territory east of the Mississippi, and cede to Spain all the territory west of the Mississippi. Thus the influence of France upon the territory of what is today the United States of America was forever broken. All the western forts of the French were turned over to the English, and a strong line of 14 British posts stretched from Oswego to Machinaw.

It was at this time that the famous conspiracy of Pontiac occurred. Pontiac was an Ottawa Indian who

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possessed both military skill and statemanship. He organized a confederacy which embraced most of the Indian tribes between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River. Under his leadership a simultaneous attack was made on the 14 outposts of the British Colonies and all but 4 of them were immediately captured. Forts Niagara, Pitt, Ligonier and Detroit alone survived. Forts Pitt and Ligonier were located in the territory that is today embraced by the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Pontiac surrendered in August, 1765, but the Indian unrest continued for some years afterward.

Closely following the surrender of Pontiac came the growing dissatisfaction of the Colonies with their mother country. Open rebellion occurred in 1775, the year after Otterbein became the pastor at Baltimore. The War of the Revolution closed in 1782, and by 1787 the westward expansion had begun. As has been previously noted, the year 1789 witnessed both the inauguration of the first President of the United States of America, and the holding of the first Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

With the French and Indian Wars opening the western territory to settlement by the English, and with the Revolutionary War conclusively decided in favor of the colonists, western expansion became rapid. The early history of our own United Brethren western movement is graphically told by Christian Newcomer in his **Journal**.

Christian Newcomer's Journal, covering his journeys from 1797-1830, was ordered translated from the German by the General Conference of 1833. John Hildt, the translator wrote that he only knew Mr. Newcomer to fail one preaching appointment, and that was due to a snow storm. Three hundred copies of the

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book were published in the year 1834. It was almost impossible to sell the *Journal*.

In 1859 several dozen copies were in the possession of Bishop Jacob Erb. A young relative of the Bishop, Rev. Daniel Eberly, undertook to sell the remaining copies and was unsuccessful, so he left them with his sister at Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania. About ten years later he asked for the books, only to find his sister had given them away. Tradition has it that she gave every preacher who called at her home a copy, and at a missionary meeting in her home gave every lady present a copy. Thus, finally, the books all got into circulation.

Today a well preserved copy will bring \$50. Dr. S. S. Hough, a member of Allegheny Conference, and long outstanding for his work as Secretary of Foreign Missions, edited the *Journal* in 1941, footnoting it in such a way as to locate the various towns mentioned, and giving brief biographical sketches of the lives of those early denominational leaders who were the associates of Newcomer in his travels.

Christian Newcomer mentions that in the year 1795, he made his first preaching tour. Among the places visited were Spruce Creek (near Tyrone) and Akwick (Aughwick, near Mt. Union). He commented on this visit: "Today I was astonished at the mountainous country through which I traveled." Later, in 1798, he added concerning the same territory: "I traveled along the Juniata for about twenty miles. My mind was lost in wonder and admiration concerning these enormous mountains." These two towns are the first Allegheny Conference towns definitely mentioned as preaching appointments of the early United Brethren Church.

In 1799, Newcomer made a tour of Western Pennsylvania, and held services at Berlin, Somerset, near Bedford, Mr. Longenacre's (Longaneckers) west of



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Connellsville, and various homes in Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. In 1801 Williamsport on the Juniata (Williamsburg) and Bellefonte were added to his preaching appointments. In 1803 Bonnet's appointment was added. This historic ground was later to become the headquarters of the United Brethren movement during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

These early journeys of Christian Newcomer give to us a vivid picture of the early advance westward of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It was emphatically not an advance of church building. Instead it was an advance of United Brethren families westward to new lands of promise. The movement was constantly westward. Pfrimmer, Berger, and Winter, all leading United Brethren Churchmen, settled in Western Pennsylvania only later to venture forth for new homes in Ohio and Indiana. This early church movement was very fluid and as such was not conducive to church building. Instead, homes were the appointed meeting places, and barns were the tabernacles where services of evangelism were conducted. On one occasion Mr. Newcomer mentions a Westmoreland County meeting in 1803 in which he records:

Today we had indeed a little pentecost, from three hundred to four hundred persons had collected, more than the barn in which we had assembled for worship, could contain. I preached to them from Titus 3 with great liberty and effect, for the salvation of souls. The congregation was remarkably attentive to the Word. Though it rained those that had no shelter in the barn kept their stand in the rain without the least disturbance. It is indeed surprising, and to me somewhat mysterious, to behold the manner in which the power of God works here among the people.

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During the time of preaching several persons fell to the floor, some laid as if they were dead, others shook so violently that two or three men could scarcely hold them; sometimes the excitement would be so great that I had to stop speaking for several minutes, until the noise abated; some few were praising God and shouting for joy. Brother Christian Berger addressed the congregation. When I had concluded my discourse in the German, I then preached in the English language from I Peter 1:3 and the effect was again the same.<sup>1</sup>

The church organization of this early day was also very loose and informal. Concerning this loose organization Jacob A. Lehman wrote as follows to the **Religious Telescope**:

Otterbein confessed before he died, 'I ought to have organized classes and churches but I felt too unworthy. I have lived to see my error in this neglect.'<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Sarah Erb Shaeffer, great granddaughter of Bishop Erb, who is living today at 1531 State Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, stated in an interview with the writer that the Wormleysburg Congregation, at which appointment the Allegheny Conference was formed, dated back to 1810 as an appointment and had no formal organization until 1840, and no church building until 1870.

As to the reason for this evident lack of organization, a very illuminating article appeared in the **Religious Telescope** as an editorial from the pen of William R. Rhinehart, the editor, which read as follows:

The question has been asked, "Why has the rise and progress of the Church not been

1. Hough, Samuel S., **Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements**, pp. 79-80.
2. **Religious Telescope**, September 29, 1843.

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given before this? And why has the census of the United Brethren not been taken, so that the **world** might **see** how they stand in round numbers?" As to giving the origin of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, we have no objection other than we anticipated that it would have appeared before this in some other form. As to the round numbers of the United Brethren in the World, we would only say that we fear that spirit, called Satan, that induced David to give the round numbers of his men to the world, is now at work in the minds of thousands. It should be enough for the United Brethren to know themselves and God which is life eternal. If so they will know even as they are known, when the books in the church triumphant shall be canvassed by the judge of the quick and the dead. <sup>1</sup>

But in spite of this evident lack of organization, the spiritual purity and strength of the early Church bound its membership together. As United Brethren families moved westward they planned that they might continue their worship in their new homes. Houses were constructed in such a way as to facilitate worship when a preaching appointment was made and that the neighbors could be invited to the home.

Among these early pioneers who came to Western Pennsylvania were John G. Pfrimmer, Christian Berger, Abraham Draksel, Jacob Winter, and Henry G. Spayth.

John G. Pfrimmer was born in Alsace, France, and came to Pennsylvania in 1788. He soon fell under the influence of the Otterbein Movement and in 1790 felt himself called to preach, and immediately entered up-

1. **Religious Telescope**, July 15, 1835.



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on the work. On May the twenty-first, 1800, Christian Newcomer recorded: "Today I came to Brother John G. Pfrimmer's; about 30 children had assembeld at his house to whom he was giving religious instruction; some were under conviction. I spoke to them." One year later in 1801, Mr. Pfrimmer moved to Washington County, Pennsylvania, where he was influential as a preacher and organizer. In 1808 he migrated to Corydon, Indiana, where William Henry Harrison appointed him one of the first three judges of the new territory. He served also as a preacher and a physician, and in 1820 also organized the first Sunday School in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, near Corydon, Indiana. He served for a time as Presiding Elder and as secretary of the Miami Conference. He was General Conference secretary in 1821. His death occurred on the fifth day of September, 1825, and he was buried near Corydon, Indiana.

Of Christian Berger, very little is known. He and John G. Pfrimmer were the first two United Brethren ministers to cross the Alleghenies. According to the United States census of 1790, both he and his wife were residents of Berks County. In 1801 he and Pfrimmer united in holding many meetings in Washington, Westmoreland, and Somerset Counties. As a result of their efforts a great revival swept Western Pennsylvania in 1803 and 1804.

The Westmoreland County records mention the sale of a portion of land, located in what is today Sewickley Township, by Christian Berger and his wife Catharine.<sup>1</sup> This would seem to indicate that he had moved from Washington County, his first home west of the Alleghenies, to Westmoreland County. The sale of land occurs at the approximate time of Berger's migration into the new Ohio country. From this time on his-

1. Westmoreland County Records, **Deed Book 13**, p. 136.

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tory has been unable to trace the life of Christian Berger.

Abraham Draksel, (later spelled Drachsel, Draxel, Troxel, and by some of his descendants of today, Troxell) while not the first United Brethren preacher<sup>1</sup> west of the Alleghenies as is mentioned on the monument erected to his memory in a little graveyard located on the outskirts of Mt. Pleasant, became the chief representative and support of the church in Western Pennsylvania. He, with John Bonnet, erected the little school house where the first General Conferences of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ were held. He was the owner of 400 acres of land, a spacious double log house, and a large barn. He died in 1825, the father of the United Brethren Church in the Mt. Pleasant area.

Jacob Winter was the first United Brethren convert west of the Alleghenies who became a preacher. He was converted in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1801, under the preaching of John G. Pfrimmer and Christian Berger. John C. Winter wrote of him, through the medium of the **Religious Telescope** in a letter that is quoted elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> that Jacob Winter was born September 16, 1780, near the place where Zion's Church now stands, and that in 1808 he began to preach in Zion's Church and other places. In 1827 he organized the Washington circuit without the aid of any other preacher. In 1837 he also joined the westward movement and moved to Eastern Ohio. His son Abraham also became a preacher and helped develop the manual labor department of Otterbein College. His granddaughter, Mary Catherine, was a member of the first graduating class of Otterbein College. She became the wife of Benjamin Handby, son of Bishop William Handby of Washington County, Pennsylvania, author

1. **Religious Telescope**, July 3, 1839.

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of the song **My Darling Nellie Grey**. Jacob Winter died October 12, 1843, in his sixty-fourth year and was buried at Luray, Ohio.

His father, Christopher Winter, and his mother, Catherine Winter, lie buried side by side in the old Zion Cemetery beside the Zion Church, seven miles north of Claysville. The following inscriptions are on their stone memorials:

In Memory  
of  
Christopher Winter  
Who departed this life  
March 13th, 1823  
Age 71 yrs.

To the living  
Religion should our thoughts engage  
Amid our youthful bloom.  
Twill fit us for declining age,  
And for the awful tomb.  
Let lively hope my soul inspire,  
Let warm affections rise;  
And may I wait with strong desire,  
To mount above the skies.  
Then we shall stand at his right hand  
And in his presence dwell.  
And him adore forever more;  
So brethren, now farewell.

In  
Memory of  
Catherine Winter  
Who departed this life,  
February 9th, 1836, aged



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82 years  
Hark the whisper  
Angels say, sister spirit,  
Come away.

Henry G. Spayth is known primarily as the first Church Historian. He was born in Germany in 1788 and was brought to America in 1791. He was licensed to preach in 1812. After preaching for three years in Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, he moved to Greensburg where he taught school and preached. Later he moved to Madison, nine miles southwest of Greensburg and remained there until 1835. The site of the Spayth home in Madison may still be visited. It is located at the southern end of the town on the Madison-Yukon road. Nearby is a family cemetery, covered over with small bushes, in a grazing field along the road. One memorial stone is still legible and reads as follows:

In Memory of  
Mariah  
Daughter of Henry and Ma.  
Spayth who died August 18th  
1830. Aged 2 years and  
6 Mo's.

In 1835 Spayth moved to Tiffin, Ohio, and shared in the work of the Sandusky Conference until his death, September 2, 1873, in his eighty-fifth year. He served as secretary for many of the conferences.

Thus it is noticed that of all these early church leaders in Western Pennsylvania, Abraham Draksel alone made it his permanent home. All the others moved westward to Ohio and to Indiana.

What church building was the first these early pioneers established, is a question of interest to all. The

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first printed record of a church building that the writer has noticed was in the forementioned letter of J. C. Winter, who spoke of Zion's Church as being in existence in 1808. As to the exact date of its building, nothing is known, except that it followed, in all probability, the great revival led by J. G. Pfrimmer and Christian Berger. Thus the probable date must fall somewhere between 1801 and 1808. Considering the events that took place in this period, 1804 is probably a logical date to assign for the erection of the first church house within the bounds of what is today known as the Allegheny Conference. Thus we may say with confidence that the Zion Church in Washington County was the first United Brethren Church building in the Allegheny Conference.

However, the center of influence of the Western Pennsylvania church moved rapidly northward to Mt. Pleasant in Westmoreland County. The little school house erected by John Bonnet and Abraham Drachsel for school and church purposes took on an early significance that soon was to influence the entire denomination.

In the meantime within the small town of Mt. Pleasant the United Brethren movement was also active. Among its founders had been Conrad Kiester, father of a long line of illustrious United Brethren leaders. His home was built some time before the year 1800. Of it Rev. S. E. Cormany says:

The first house of Conrad Kiester still stands, though over one hundred years old. In order to use it for religious services benches were prepared to neatly fill both rooms on the first floor. These benches were removed after services, stored away in a suitable shed, easy of access, and brought in

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again as occasion required.<sup>1</sup>

By 1810 Mt. Pleasant was a little town of 34 log houses. A small log church had been erected by this time on the land of Mr. Clarence Burleigh. His original thought was that it should be used as a public church for all denominational bodies to worship in. However, he later decided that there should be more definite ownership and control, and so proposed to sell it to the highest bidder. As a result the Associate Reformed and the United Brethren churches united in paying two hundred and fifty dollars for the property. The deed bears the date of November 30, 1815, the same year that saw the first General Conference convene in Mt. Pleasant. United Brethren trustees at this time were John Bonnet, John Shupe and Gorgias Fultz.<sup>2</sup>

This log building, we are told, had an aisle in the middle, was rather long as compared with the width, and was heated with two stoves. There were windows on each side, and the door was in the end toward Main Street. The benches were without backs, made of slabs with auger holes bored on the rounding side, into which were inserted wooden pegs for legs. The pulpit was made of rough boards, two being placed on end, with one across the top and one in front by way of finishing.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the services held in both the homes and the little union church, Rev. S. E. Cormany says:

The services were conducted almost exclusively in the German language. One minister would read a chapter, another comment some, another read a text and preach an

1. Cormany, S. E., **History of the Mt. Pleasant Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 18.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 19.



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hour or so, then still another would exhort, or possibly take the hymn book and commence by saying, 'Yetst vollen vir hoeren vas der Dichter sagt,'- hear what the poet says,- Brother Kiester will lead the singing. Then intoning one or two lines, the singing proceeded; then another line or two, and so on till the end of the selection was reached. At its close a brief prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer, in unison. Before the benediction was pronounced the senior preacher usually cordially invited all who were willing to remain for refreshments or dinner. Thus 'Yetzt vollen vir die Versammlung schliezen. Alle die vollen sind eingelaten zu bleiben zum mittagessen.'

The dinner was a time for general sociability. Great long tables were set, and cold meats, bread, butter, pie, and coffee were served freely. But before partaking, a hymn was sung, and prayer offered before as also after the meal.

After dinner many who had come a long distance returned home, while others reassembled for social class and prayer meeting services. Many times at these after dinner meetings seekers would kneel for prayers and counsel and would be converted, and so all went home rejoicing.

Occasionally announcements were sent out far and wide for a 'big meeting' (eine grosze Versammlung), usually commencing on Saturday afternoon and continuing for three or four days or a week. And from Somerset, Washington, Fayette, and Allegheny counties and elsewhere they would come, some in one

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or two horse wagons, some in ox-wagons, others on horseback, and all would be entertained freely. The membership in the immediate community would sometimes furnish part of the necessary supplies, but often the place where the gathering was held furnished all.

Abraham Draksel had such a meeting once, or oftener, for a whole week, generously furnishing everything necessary for all comers.<sup>1</sup>

From this picture of pioneer life in the western part of Allegheny Conference, let us turn our thoughts to the eastern section of our Conference, in Clearfield County, near where the town of Osceola is located today. Here Henry Kephart, Sr., was registered as an inhabitant of Potter Township, Center County, Pennsylvania in 1801. In 1803 he moved to a farm two and one half miles north of what is now Osceola. Henry Kephart, Jr., the father of Isaiah Lafayette, Ezekiel Boring, and Cyrus J. Kephart, was born in 1802. In 1825 both he and his young wife-to-be embraced the Christian religion and united with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. They were married on March 23, 1826. In the spring of 1827 they purchased a small story and a half cabin for three hundred and fifty dollars. A family altar was immediately erected in their cabin and all through their long years of toil, care, and anxiety the fire on that altar was kept constantly burning until their death.

Henry Kephart, Jr. was licensed to preach in 1834 and was ordained in 1837.

This little cabin of the Kephart family was frequently the center of religious services. As early as 1830 the itinerant preachers of the United Brethren Church visited them and

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 5 - 6.

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established regular preaching in their cabin once every four weeks. The neighbors (six or eight families) would gather in of a week day evening for preaching. They would bring with them long pieces of pitchpine wood split fine, and after meeting was over, they would light their fagots and proceed home.<sup>1</sup>

What a beautiful procession it must have made. Flaming torches lighting the silver snows of Pennsylvania mountain sides as these Christian pilgrims made their way homeward after a devotional service in the home of one of the brethren.

While the date of this particular period is a little later than that of the Mt. Pleasant section, it is undoubtedly a true picture of the religious services of the early nineteenth century as well. The section mentioned is only a little to the north of that traveled in 1795 by Bishop Christian Newcomer.

Dr. I. L. Kephart, when editor of the **Religious Telescope**, wrote a series of articles on "Pioneer Life in the Alleghenies." The following quotation from one of these articles well pictures the early pioneer life of the United Brethren Church in Central Pennsylvania:

These cabins not only served as places of abode, but in a few cases for houses of public worship as well. In these early days the pioneer United Brethren preachers from across the mountains found their way into this wilderness, and there being no school house or church, 'Grandfather Goss' and later the writer's father, opened their cabins, accorded the preacher a hearty welcome, lodged him, and gladly shared with him the best of their

1. Kephart, Cyrus J., and Funk, William R., **Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart, D. D.**, p. 30, Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House (1909).



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homely fare. On his arrival the boys were sent around to the neighbors to inform them that there would be preaching that night. In due time the cabin would be crowded with ten or a dozen of the neighbors, the preacher would preach, and after preaching spend an hour in prayer, exhortation, and 'experience meeting.' The writer well remembers one such meeting held in his father's cabin (for not until he was in his sixth year did his parents move into a larger hewed log house). The cabin was sixteen by twenty feet in size. In it were the corner chimney, the ladder by which to ascend into the loft, two beds and a trundle-bed shoved under one of the larger beds, a weaver's loom and a table. A few rough short benches were placed in the remaining unoccupied space for the neighbors. We children were cooped up on the beds. A tallow tip, borrowed for the occasion from our best and nearest neighbor, 'Katy' Baughman, sat on the table, and one of the old-fashioned lard-burning lamps hung by a hook from one of the joists in the back part of the room near the door, and a comfortable fire burned in the fireplace. It was late in the fall and the night was cool. The light was dim, and the weird scene and the character of the meeting throughout made such an indelible impression upon the writer's child-mind that he sees it as clearly as if it were enacted but yesterday. The preacher was Adolphus Harnden, born and reared in the state of Maine, who afterward served long and usefully as one of the most faithful itinerants of Allegheny Conference. He was then

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a young man, tall, of large, bony frame, had a bushy head of black hair, large mouth and nose, and a stentorian voice. He traveled the circuit on foot, and, as it embraced the whole of Clearfield, and portions of Cambria, Indiana, and Jefferson counties (all a vast wilderness), it required six weeks for him to make the round, during which time he would average not less than five sermons a week. Because of his wonderful enthusiasm and his traveling on foot, the people named him 'the Pilgrim,' some of them having read 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.'

On the evening referred to above, he sang, prayed, and preached with great enthusiasm. After the sermon he prayed again, then sang again, called on someone else to pray, sang again, exhorted, got happy, and began to shout. While shouting, swinging his long arms and clapping his hands, he leaped back and forth in the little aisle between the benches leading to the door, exclaiming at the top of his voice, 'I hope to shout glory when the world's on fire,' and just then he touched his bushy head to the flame of the lamp above described and set his hair on fire. It sizzled and spurted a little while and Harn-den kept on shouting all the time, 'I hope to shout glory when the world's on fire.' The flame in his hair soon died out, nor was he burned, but for some time there was a strong odor of burnt hair pervading the cabin. In due time the meeting closed, the mountaineers returned to their homes, guided through the wilderness by their pine torches, wonderfully impressed by the words and manner of

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the 'new preacher.' He in due time ascended the ladder to the loft, and was soon in the embrace of a sound sleep in the spare bed, which mother's hand had prepared for such visitors.

The faithful, self-sacrificing labors of the pioneer United Brethren and Methodist preachers in those regions had much to do with shaping the morals of the early settlers and determining the destiny of them and their children. With scarcely any pay in the shape of money, clad in coarse homespun, and subsisting on the homely fare of the mountaineers, they traveled from place to place, entered the cabins, and carried into them their pious convictions, their devotion, and their religious enthusiasm.

In accomplishing this important work no one of them was more devoted and efficient than Adolphus Harnden. His piety was unquestionable and his enthusiasm knew no bounds. Strong, young, healthy, vigorous, and bold as a lion, he could go anywhere. His custom was to rise before or about the peep of day, retire to a secluded place in the wilderness for devotion, get happy, and shout till he would make the forest around resound with his stentorian voice. On one occasion, having lodged overnight with a settler in what was known as 'Morgan's Land,' and some six or eight inches of snow having fallen during the night, after breakfast he started for his next appointment; but he had not gone far into the forest until he retired three or four rods from the roadside for prayer. As usual he had not prayed long until he became happy



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and shouted, and rolled around in the snow at a wonderful rate. While thus exercising, two men came riding by, on horseback, and hearing the noise went to him and spoke, but all to no purpose; he continued his shouting. They then rode on hastily to the house from which his tracks had come, called to the people, and in an excited manner told them they should go out into the timber immediately and see to the man who had lodged with them overnight, that he was out there rolling in the snow, crazy as a loon, and would surely freeze to death. The man with whom he had lodged, knowing something of his habit of shouting, calmly replied with a smile, 'There is no occasion for alarm; he is enjoying his accustomed morning shout.'

But with all his eccentricities and enthusiasm, Harnden did a great deal of good. His life was upright and exemplary, and his preaching so full of Bible that the word was in demonstration of the spirit and power. When the writer was in his fifth year, his father built a new barn and raised it without whiskey. A big meeting was appointed to be held in that barn in the autumn of that year. In due time Harnden was on hand, and with him the presiding elder, Harmonious Ow. The elder proposed that, according to the custom of the mountains, they dispense with preaching on Sunday evening and have communion and feet washing exercises instead. To this Harnden objected.

He said, 'We ought to have preaching on Sunday evening and invite mourners. This barn was raised without whiskey and the

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Lord is going to do something wonderful for us if we do our duty.' The elder said, 'Well will you preach?' 'Yes, I will,' promptly replied Harnden. Then they arranged to have the communion and feet washing exercises Sabbath afternoon, and in the evening Harnden preached one of his storming sermons. The result was more than a dozen seekers came forward, and before the meeting was over all were converted and a class of sixteen was organized. 'I knew it! I knew it!' was Harnden's triumphant declaration. This barn was raised without whiskey, and the Lord would not overlook it.'

His opposition to the use of intoxicating liquors was very intense and it being the custom then for almost every settler to keep whiskey in his cabin and to 'tipple' and use it freely at their barn-raising and log rollings, and in the harvest field, Harnden waged a relentless warfare against it in every shape. He saw its bad effects—that it was a disturber of the peace and a developer of appetites and dissipated habits that would soon work great sorrow and destitution to the pioneers and their children.

Many years after the time above referred to he traveled the Clearfield Circuit again. He then rode a valuable horse, which at one time in a little town was taken violently ill with colic. Some of the horsemen gathered round and urged that he procure some whiskey and mix a good quantity of black pepper in it and pour it into the horse, assuring him that it would speedily effect a cure. Harnden promptly replied, 'When I and my horse

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cannot live without whiskey, we are going to die.' He then procured some hot water, mixed pepper in it and poured it into the horse, and soon he was well. 'There,' said he, 'If I had given him the whiskey you would all have declared that it was the whiskey that cured him.' All can easily imagine how glad such an enthusiast was to hold a meeting in the first barn raised in the county without whiskey.<sup>1</sup>

These vivid pictures of early Pennsylvania life among the United Brethren families in the first years of the nineteenth century give us a social and spiritual background that is challenging. Their spiritual passion alone brought into being the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, for scattered as the people were in that day, no other power could have saved the denomination. The name of Adolphus Harnden is mentioned as a member of the first session of the newly formed Allegheny Conference in the year 1839. The name was written however in the conference records of that time as Adolphus Henendon.

While the early Church in Allegheny Conference territory had its appointments in Central Pennsylvania, its greater strength was, nevertheless, in the western section. Washington, Westmoreland, Fayette, and Somerset counties were the most prominent, with the former two being outstanding. This territory was also centrally located in relationship to the growing Church.

With the western advance having reached well into the state of Ohio, it was found necessary in the year 1810 to organize a new conference. The old Hagerstown Conference, mother conference of the

1. John, Lewis F., *The Life of Ezekiel Boring Kephart*, quoting from "Pioneer Life in the Alleghenies," as written in the **Religious Telescope** by I. L. Kephart, pp. 52-59.



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Church, was to include all the eastern territory, with the newly formed conference to include the Ohio territory. This new organization became known as the Miami Conference.

It was only natural that with the division of the Church into two conferences, that the question of authority would come up. While the Hagerstown Conference had been the head of the early Church, the formation of a new conference thrust the question upon the fellowship as to where the authority of the Church should be vested.

In 1813, at the annual meeting of the Hagerstown Conference, held at Christian Herr's home in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the following notations were made:

4. C. Newcomer was elected Bishop for one year.
8. Resolved that the Confession of Faith and Evangelical Discipline of the United Brethren in Christ shall be printed.<sup>1</sup>

It was only a human reaction on the part of the Ohio brethren to feel that they were being "left-out" in the important work of planning the future of their growing Church. They wanted a share in the planning of the church program and so were not slow in mentioning that fact to the general church.

They did not request a share in the working out of the Church's future. They only stated that they would take part in the future organization and progress of the general church. No questions were asked. They merely gave their plans through the resolution which they adopted and sent to the Hagerstown Conference taking for granted that they would be approved. The following is the notation from the Miami Conference minutes

1. Drury, A. W., **Minutes of the Annual and General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1800-1818**, p. 31.

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of August 23, 1814, as recorded at Andrew Zeller's in Montgomery County, Ohio:

The present order or discipline of the Church was taken into consideration and protested against. It was moved and adopted that there shall be a convention, and that two members from each district shall assemble at Abraham Draksel's in Westmoreland County. The districts were arranged as follows: first district, Baltimore; second, Hagerstown; third, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, south of the Allegheny Mountains; fourth, Pennsylvania north of the Allegheny Mountains; fifth, Muskingum; sixth, New Lancaster, Ohio; seventh, Miami; eighth, Kentucky and Indiana; ninth, Virginia. The delegates shall come together Nov. 22; the time, however, was set forward to June next year. This convention shall form a church constitution for the Brethren.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that Mt. Pleasant had been chosen as the site of the first General Conference of the Church. There were probably two reasons for this. As a comparatively new settlement of United Brethren families (it had only been in existence for a little over 15 years) it had a neutral appearance to the young Miami Conference. It seemed reasonable to expect that there could be no favoring of either conference here, neither could there be any feeling on the part of the Hagerstown Conference that her position of leadership was being questioned. Secondly, it was in a centrally located section of the church and easily accessible to the whole church.

On the sixth of June, 1815, the first General Conference assembled at the Bonnet schoolhouse near Mt.

1. Op. Cit., p. 78

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Pleasant. As might well be expected the feeling was rather tense among the 14 assembled delegates. Newcomer wrote as follows concerning the opening of the convention:

This day the General Conference commenced at old Brother Draksel's. May the Lord have mercy on us. Instead of love and unanimity, the spirit of hatred and discord seemed to prevail. May the Lord in mercy grant us more wisdom and grace. . . 7th—This day we met again; bless the Lord, the heat had considerably abated, and the business before us was conducted better than I had expected.<sup>1</sup>

This General Conference was outstandingly successful in accomplishing what it started out to do. One action was:

The Confession of Faith and the Discipline were considered, in some respects enlarged, some things omitted, on the whole improved, and ordered printed.

Jacob Baulus, Secretary.<sup>2</sup>

It was generally agreed that there would be a General Conference held every four years, which alone should be the authority to elect bishops and revise the discipline. Contrary to common opinion, there were no bishops elected at this first General Conference.

In order that the spirit of brotherly love prevail, and the brethren keep in contact with one another in spiritual things, the bishops were required to travel to all the conferences and share in all their sessions.

The 14 delegates to the first General Conference included 3 names that were prominent in Allegheny

1. Hough, Samuel S., **Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements**, p. 176.
2. Drury, A. W., **Minutes of the Annual and General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1800-1818**, p. 66.



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Conference beginnings, namely, Abraham Draksel, Christian Berger, and Henry G. Spayth. The other members who composed this first General Conference were: Christian Newcomer, Abraham Hiestand, Andrew Zeller, Daniel Troyer, George Benedum, Christian Krum, Isaac Niswander, John Snyder, Abraham Mayer, Henry Kumler, and Jacob Baulus.

Two years later a second General Conference was held, this time in Mt. Pleasant proper. The Conference opened on the second of June, 1817. At this meeting two actions of interest are noted:

7. Resolved that an annual conference shall be held in the Muskingum District, beginning June 1, 1818.
8. Resolved that three hundred Disciplines be printed in the German language, and one hundred in the English language.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of a new Conference in the Muskingum district is of particular importance to us as we consider the history of Allegheny Conference. This new Conference was to include the eastern section of Ohio, and the counties of Westmoreland and Washington in Pennsylvania.

It was at this Conference that the two bishops were elected, namely, Christian Newcomer and Andrew Zeller. Newcomer had been first elected in 1813, the third Bishop of the United Brethren in Christ Church. He held this high office until his death in 1830. Henry Spayth served as the secretary to this second General Conference and closed his notations by saying, "The Conference again closed with preaching and hearty prayer."<sup>2</sup>

1. Drury, A. W., *Minutes of the Annual and General Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1800-1818*, p. 67.
2. Drury, A. W., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 325.

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We turn our attention now to the newly formed Muskingum Conference that embraced the eastern part of Ohio and the western counties of Pennsylvania. This new Conference was at a disadvantage from the beginning, because of the distances involved, and the travel necessitated. At the first Conference session, held in Harrison County, Ohio, only seven ministers were present, and of these seven, only one, Jacob Winter, appears to have come from Pennsylvania. Noticeable for their absence were Abraham Draksel, Christian Berger, Henry Spayth and Henry Erret.

It was not until the fourth Conference session that Muskingum Conference convened in Western Pennsylvania, April 30, 1821. This meeting was held at the home of Henry Erret, near Madison, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. At this meeting, Henry G. Spayth was elected the Presiding Elder of the Western Pennsylvania section of the Conference. This post he appears to have held for several years.

The sixth session was also held in Pennsylvania. It convened on the twentieth day of May, 1823, at the home of Daniel Reis, Washington County. Efforts were made at this Conference to obtain better support for its traveling preachers.

The eighth session was held at the home of Daniel Foreman, near Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, on the twenty-third of May, 1825. Henry G. Spayth was again elected Presiding Elder of the Western Pennsylvania district. During the past year Abraham Draksel had died, and mention of his death was fittingly made by Newcomer in his **Journal**, as he comments on the Mt. Pleasant meeting of the Muskingum Conference.

The tenth session was held at Mt. Pleasant, on the seventeenth of April, 1827. Very few were present from the Ohio section of the Conference.

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It will be noticed that during this period of eight years there seemed to be a common consent agreement to hold the Conference session alternately in Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. However, it was generally true that the section of the Conference that entertained the brethren was by far the dominant section in representation. High rivers and late snows were bound to interfere with travel during the spring months when the Conference was meeting.

The General Conference of 1833, realizing the problems of the far flung Conference, gave back to the Pennsylvania Conference the territory in Western Pennsylvania.

It will be noticed that the term Pennsylvania Conference is used rather than Hagerstown Conference. In 1829, the General Conference came to the realization that the mother Conference of the Church had become too large to care for. Entertainment problems were arising for such a large conference. Travel also was becoming an issue as the Conference was extending northward and westward. With this in mind a committee was appointed to divide the Conference to the best advantage.

The committee appointed to divide the Hagerstown Conference district, reported that the said district shall in future consist of the state of Virginia, and the counties of Washington and Allegheny in Maryland, and that the remaining part of the said district shall constitute a new one, to be called the Harrisburg district.

In March, 1830, the venerable old body assembled to Shopp's meeting house, near Shiremanstown, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, to hold its last meeting. The names of seventy-six ministers were enrolled, fifty-



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eight of them were in attendance.

For the first time in a long series of years, the familiar face of Newcomer was absent. A few weeks before he had gone to be present with the Lord. 'Love and unity,' writes the secretary, 'reigned in the conference.' Near the close of the session it was

'Resolved, That in future Hagerstown Conference shall have the old protocol (minutes), and that the Harrisburg Conference shall procure a new book.' To this resolution it is added that, 'Bishop Kumler gave to William Brown \$2, with which he shall procure a new protocol for the Harrisburg Conference, and shall transcribe from the old into the new all proceedings of importance.'

Thus was the original Conference of the United Brethren in Christ, after an existence of forty-one years, divided,—the southern part retaining the old name, and the old protocol. The old name was soon exchanged for Virginia, and Harrisburg for Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

It was to this newly formed Pennsylvania Conference that the Western Pennsylvania part of Muskingum Conference was added in 1833. This remained the boundary limitation of the new Conference until its division in 1838.

It will be well for us, at this time, to consider a few of the problems of the early Church. As will be noticed from the early references to Church meetings, printing of Disciplines, etc., the early Church was largely a German speaking organization. The ministers preached in German except on rare occasions when the English language was used. Newcomer tells us that on

1. Lawrence, John, **The History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, Vol. II, pp. 206-207, Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Printing Establishment (1860).

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occasion he preached in the English language. In one reference he says, "I tried to speak in the English language because the people did not understand the German."<sup>1</sup>

As a logical result of this emphasis on German preaching, the children of the United Brethren homes would be converted in United Brethren meetings and then would seek an English speaking Church. Since the Methodist church was the most similar of the larger denominations of that day, we lost thousands of our youth to that denomination.

With America fast becoming an English speaking country, it was necessary that an immediate change of policy on the part of the Church occur if the denomination were to live. It would seem that in the face of such a situation, an immediate swing to English preaching would take place. Instead, however, we notice an editorial in the **Religious Telescope** as late as 1835, stating:

Again there are some of our German preachers, who are able men in the ministry, ready to retire from the gospel field and hang their harps on the willows; because they say, 'The world is becoming English and therefore their mission will run out in five or ten years to come. But we would inform them that their predictions in relation to this matter are incorrect; especially when we behold thousands of European emigrants that are yearly pouring into our country.... If ever German preaching was necessary, this is the time.'<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the **Religious Telescope** was printed in English undoubtedly did much to give strength to

1. Hough, Samuel S., **Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements**, p. 20.
2. **Religious Telescope**, July 15, 1835.

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the English speaking movement. Its first issue was printed in Circleville, Ohio, December 31, 1834. Had the paper been first printed in the east it is very probable that it would have employed the German tongue.

In 1840, John Russell, later Bishop, pastor of the Otterbein congregation in Baltimore, Maryland, began to publish a German paper called **Die Geschaeflige Martha** (The Busy Martha). In 1841, the General Conference authorized the publication of a German paper in Baltimore. This replaced the earlier paper by authorization, but retained the original name. Jacob Erb, Bishop and pastor of the Otterbein congregation in Baltimore as well, was elected the editor. This paper was discontinued in 1842. In October, 1846, the Publishing House began the publication of **De Deutche Telescope** (The German Telescope). Its editor was Nehemiah Altman, a German Jew who had been converted by Bishop Henry Kumler, Sr. In 1849, the name **Die Geschaeflige Martha** was restored, and then changed in 1851 to **Der Froeliche Botschafter** (The Joyful Messenger). This continued publication until the last German conference was combined with the English conferences in September, 1930. This unification resulted in the discontinuing of the German paper on the thirty-first of December, 1930.

However, the German papers never received the full support accorded the **Religious Telescope**, and the English language gradually superseded the German as the Church grew.

In the first statistical report of the sale of the two papers in Allegheny Conference, printed in 1851, it is noted that 280 families took the **Religious Telescope**, while only 13 took the **Busy Martha**. This does not give us a true picture of the number of German and English United Brethren families in the Conference at that time, however, because the two papers had taken up



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opposite sides on the controversial question of education.

Bishop Russell, one of the outstanding opponents of educational institutions, was using the **Busy Martha** to combat the movement toward the establishment of colleges. Since it was in the year 1851 that Mt. Pleasant College was officially opened, it can easily be understood why the pastors of this period did not urge the purchase of the **Busy Martha**. The story is told that Bishop Russell was invited to preach the sermon at the opening of Lebanon Valley College at Anneville, Pennsylvania, with the thought that it would put him in the position of favoring education. The Bishop accepted the honor, and upon addressing his audience announced his text to be, "Knowledge puffeth up." It is said that so powerful was the address, that at its close fully a third of the students packed their belongings and returned home.

By the year 1838, when the Allegheny Conference was set aside from the Pennsylvania Conference, the English language had largely taken the place of the German, although German preaching was still quite prevalent.

Throughout these years of Church progress, the numerical size of the Pennsylvania Conference had been gradually increasing. In 1830, at the last meeting of the old Hagerstown Conference, there were 76 ministers enrolled from both the Virginia and the Pennsylvania territory. In 1838 there were 98 preachers and 7 applicants for license present at the Wormleysburg Conference.

Bishop Jacob Erb had invited the Pennsylvania Conference to meet at his spacious home, located on a farm overlooking the valley where the present town of Wormleysburg is located. Today you may stand beside the old homestead of Bishop Erb and look across the

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Susquehanna River to the dome of the State Capitol Building at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The original house at which the Conference met is still standing. It is a large frame building with four rooms and a central hall both upstairs and downstairs. At the time of the Conference in 1838, the whole of what is today Wormleysburg was the orchard of Bishop Erb. On the hillside above Wormleysburg, the house, barn, and farmland were located.

A sister of the Bishop lived about a mile down the valley in the little village of Wormleysburg. Her home also is still standing, having been modernized and remodeled into an antique shop.

It was to the scene of this quiet farm land on the banks of the Susquehanna that the ministers of the Conference of 1838 met. The entire Conference was the guest of Bishop Jacob Erb, then only 34 years of age. It might be wondered how over a hundred men could be given shelter and food for the better part of a week. Today as we look back to these pioneer ministers, we gain more and more respect for them as we realize how they made the best of the conditions that they faced.

While visiting the old Bishop Erb home, the writer was accompanied by one of the older ministers of the Pennsylvania Conference, Rev. H. W. Zuse, the present pastor of our Church at Enola, Pennsylvania. When faced with the question of shelter for over 100 men, Rev. Zuse remarked that in his own youth he remembered going to many meetings where straw was thrown on the floor of the rooms of the house and from 20 to 30 of the men would sleep in one room. The conditions were so crowded that in the early moments of the night, it was not uncommon for one of the men to cry out, "Boys, it's time to turn," whereupon the cramped occupants of the room would "turn" to a

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more comfortable position. It is very probable that on the occasion of the 1838 Conference, quite a few of the ministers found shelter in the spacious barn, with the remainder being cared for in the large home of their young Bishop.

When it came to feeding the Conference a little more equitable arrangement was found. Forty of the ministers were provided for at the home of the Bishop, 40 more were provided with their meals by the sister of Bishop Erb, whose home was one mile south along the Susquehanna, and the remaining members of the Conference were fed by other families of the Wormleysburg appointment.

It was probably due to the difficulties involved in caring for the Conference, however, that the subject of division was brought into discussion. No record is available as to what discussion took place in regard to the division of the Conference. We do know that it had not been recommended by the General Conference, for there is a very definite statement by the preceding General Conference entitling the Pennsylvania Conference to her delegates as a united organization. Had any division been recommended, there would likely have been an arrangement for representation of the new Conference in the coming General Conference.

The only mention that can be found of the division of the Conference is the closing record of the minutes of the Pennsylvania Conference. It reads as follows:

Question 12. When and where shall the Allegheny Conference meet?

Answer. At Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, on the last Monday in March, 1839.<sup>1</sup>

With this simple statement, Allegheny Conference was launched on her career of leadership, that progressively has influenced the entire Church both educationally and spiritually.

1. Religious Telescope, July 8, 1838.



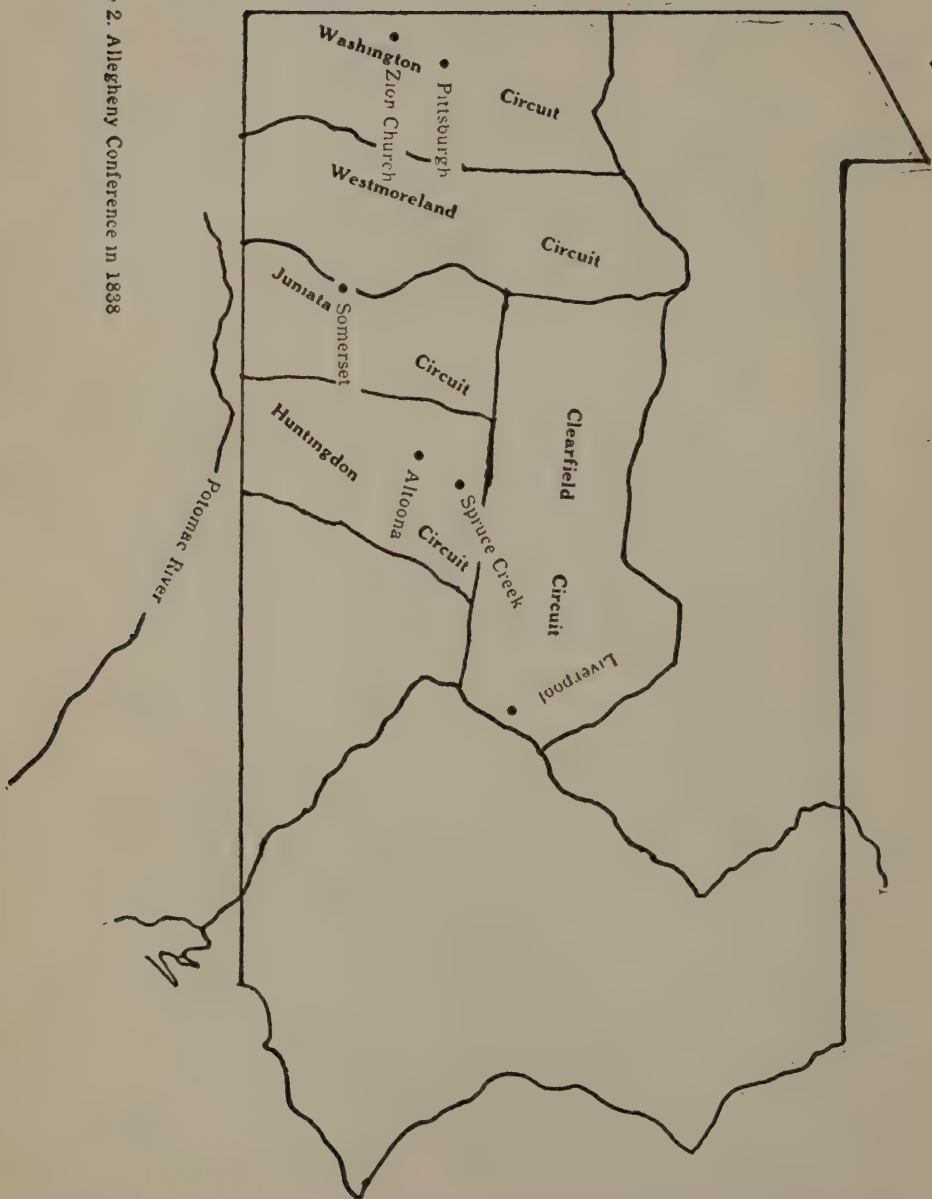


Figure 2. Allegheny Conference in 1838

## Chapter IV

# ORGANIZATION AND EARLY GROWTH OF THE ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

### Early Conference Ministers

The first thing that is so noticeable about the membership of the ministry of the newly formed Allegheny Conference was their extreme youthfulness. While we have no record of their ages, it may be confidently stated that the 1840 Conference, at which time the work had been well stabilized, of the 9 ministers listed as being stationed, only John Wallace and John R. Sittman were over the age of 30 years. The dominating leaders of this period were: Jacob Ritter, William Beighel, George Miller, J. B. Ressler, and Isaiah Potter. Jacob Ritter was only 23 years old at the time of the organization, and 27 at the time of his election to the office of Presiding Elder at the 1842 Conference, which was held in Mt. Pleasant.

Why were the ministers of Allegheny Conference, who accepted work, so youthful? The answer is obvious when we take into consideration the nature of the territory that they were expected to cover. Eight ministers, including the presiding elder, were expected to care for the entire Allegheny Conference that today engages 97 full time ministers, a Conference superintendent, and various other religious leaders.

Allegheny Conference was largely wilderness territory in 1838, and as such it was ministered to by young ministers, the older men being sent to the more established appointments. In fact, single men were

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preferred for these large wilderness circuits, since they could travel more often, being without home ties. Then, too, in the earlier days of the Church the married men were to receive \$160 a year, if they could get it, and the single men \$80 a year, if they could get it. Any amount they gathered over their allowance was to be turned into a common treasury to take care of their less fortunate brethren. In the early days following the formation of the Allegheny Conference this amount had been raised to \$200 for a married man and \$100 for a single man. The writer could find no foundation upon which to base the tradition that is mentioned, namely, that there was an additional allowance for each child in the minister's family.

On the contrary, Rev. Isaiah Potter, in writing to the **Religious Telescope**<sup>1</sup> as late as 1852, suggested that the sum of \$200 was not sufficient to care for the needs of a pastor with a large family, and proposed that there should be an added allowance for ministers having children. This would indicate that no such allowance had been made!

However, it does seem that young men with a view to taking care of their financial situation, and finding work in the ministry at the same time, did go so far as to ask for work as single men, and then make a proposal of marriage to the girl of their choice, get married, and ask for the salary of a married man. This situation became at least suspicious enough that the Annual Conference of 1846 passed this resolution:

Resolved that all young men entering the itinerancy must travel three years for a single man's salary, notwithstanding they enter into the bonds of matrimony.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, August 4, 1852.

2. **Religious Telescope**, March 11, 1846.



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### Jacob Ritter

The period of 1838-1861 was chosen as a definite period of church stabilization and growth in Allegheny Conference, mainly because it reflected the courage, vision, and dynamic forcefulness of one of its least known early church fathers, Jacob Ritter. To him, more than any other man, Allegheny Conference owed her gigantic strides in education, organization, and membership.

His impetuous, dynamic enthusiasm kept him constantly in trouble, brought the wrath of more than one high church officer upon his head, and kept both his fellow ministers and his Bishops constantly wondering what he would do next. But always he had the genius of winning his opponents, and of pushing forward his advanced program in spite of all opposition. His sense of humor never failed him, and while it became bitingly sarcastic at times, he was always able to win the confidence and the forgiveness of those upon whom his wrath fell.

Because of the unique personality of the man, and because he more than any other person built the young Allegheny Conference for the future, a rather lengthy biography of this outstanding leader of the United Brethren Church will now be given.

Jacob Ritter was born near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, on the twenty-eighth of March, 1815. At the age of 12 he was placed in the family of his brother-in-law, who resided in Chambersburg, in order that he might attend the high school there. Here he completed what was then considered an advanced education. At the age of 17 he was converted in the Old Stone Church at Chambersburg, where a great revival was in progress. A few weeks later he united with the Church and at once began to enter the field of Christian service. It was during that same year that he received a license to exhort, and immediately attracted

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much attention as a speaker.

An account of his early ministry reads as follows:

In 1833, he attended the conference at Millersburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he was given a license to preach. At that conference, pressing calls came from the mountain regions in the western part of the state, where some of our people had located. In response to these calls, Mr. Ritter was appointed to what was then called Huntingdon Circuit, although not at this time a properly organized circuit. The field embraced the larger part of six counties and was about three hundred miles in circumference, with but one small church-house and a class of thirteen members at Bellefonte. A large field, therefore, was opened, in which the boy preacher could test his mettle. Had he not possessed grit and push, he would have given up at the sight of such work.

In those days comparatively little attention was given to the matter of organization, or the formation of classes. So absorbed were the missionaries in the work of evangelism that they seldom took time to number Israel. To this work Mr. Ritter devoted himself with all the ardor of his soul. It was in harmony with his usual sagacity and foresight, which anticipated so many of the institutions and departments of Church work in later times. He went from house to house talking and praying with those who had professed conversion, and who claimed, after a fashion, to have a membership in the Church, as well as with others whose bias was in our favor. After six months the boy preacher had col-

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lected over one hundred names which he formed into classes and organizations. Later he received others into the Church publicly. During the year he held a camp-meeting on the circuit which resulted in seventy-five conversions, sixty of whom united with the Church. Prejudice against the work gradually subsided, and Mr. Ritter went to conference the following year to report a membership on the mission of above two hundred.<sup>1</sup>

With the formation of Allegheny Conference, Jacob Ritter received as his first Allegheny appointment, in 1839, the chairmanship of the Washington Circuit. As co-pastor with him, Adolphus Henendon was appointed. From what we have read of the latter, this must have been an outstanding team of evangelists, filled with humor, pathos, dramatics, and spiritual power that would stir any community, and emotionally prepare them to give their lives in service to their God. At the close of the first tour of this team, as they covered their three hundred and fifty mile circuit, Ritter wrote the following report to the office of the **Religious Telescope**:

Dear Brethren:

With pleasure I would inform you that God has recently visited our circuit in a very favorable manner. This circuit is about 350 miles in circumference. Last spring I found within the bounds about 300 members; they were kind but awful to relate not more than twenty odd professed to enjoy experimental religion. . . . . Our first protracted meeting was held at J. Huddle's, Allegheny County. . . Two professed to have found peace with God—the rest seeking after Him whom their

1. Weekley, W. M., and Fout, H. H., **Our Heroes**, pp. 85-87, Dayton, Ohio: Otterbein Press (1908).



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souls desire to love,—Brethren pray for them. Here some of the old school Presbyterians have searched the scriptures to find, if possible, something to condemn this course, but they have finally given it up, and acknowledged the whole scripture to be in favor of it.

Our second protracted meeting was held in the Zion Church, Washington County. Here we had to expel some few for disorderly conduct. The altar was soon crowded about with mourners. O may God keep the members faithful.

Our third meeting was held at Wheeling Waters in the German meeting house....

Our fourth meeting was held in Butler County. Here our society consists of some eighty odd members, but perhaps not more than five or six enjoy experimental religion. Some said if we would introduce the mourners bench they would leave the church... May God open their eyes.....

Our fifth protracted meeting was held at St. Johns Church. The Lord was with us....

Our sixth meeting was held at West Alexandria, Washington County, in the Methodist meeting house... For the satisfaction of the brethren, I would say that the holy fire of God is burning at almost every appointment, and the majority of the people concur with us, and that our course is the proper course.

The circuit must be divided at our next annual conference. I hope that the people of God will pray for our Zion here.

Jacob Ritter

Washington, (Pa.) Circuit, December, 1838.<sup>1</sup>

1. Religious Telescope, January 23, 1839.

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This report of Ritter's awakened a spirit of family pride on the part of a brother of Jacob Winter, J. C. Winter. The letter following is particularly valuable since it gives a very splendid picture of the early church fathers, as well as of some of the social customs and mores of the early Church:

A peep at the pulpit or Sacred Desk.

Brother Rhinehart.

.....The pulpit I perceive to be a desk elevated in the church house for the purpose of celebrating the service of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, in preaching the gospel of Christ to a sinful world.....I looked again to the sacred desk and lo there stood the old ambassador in Christ's stead, good old Father in the church, we no more call him Father Otterbein, but a saint in Glory.

Upon another time I viewed it again and there stood Fathers Newcomer, Geeting, Traksel, and Pframmer, filled with the love of God.

Newcomer had been a Mennonite, and always wore a frock coat with straight collar (during his preaching) and no beard. Geeting was a Presbyterian, Traksel had been an Amish and wore a round breasted coat, with standing collar. He also wore a beard. Pframmer had been a Presbyterian. During his preaching he wore a round breasted coat differing a little from that of Traksel's. At this time they called themselves United Brethren in Christ, which they were in deed and in truth. They never said that we preachers should all wear coats alike, and thereby raise a fashion. In short they never quarrelled about their own or other people's clothing...

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They made a mourners bench throughout the whole Zion house. This occurred almost every time of their preaching, even in Zion Church, Washington County. There the children of God were made to trust upon His love. Those were love feasts indeed which occurred about thirty-eight years ago. (about 1800) . . . . .

Yours in the bonds of peace,  
J. C. Winter

Licking Co., Ohio, March 30th, 1839<sup>1</sup>

A part of the letter from J. C. Winter that is not quoted here went on to say that the emotional, illiterate preaching of this day is to be condemned, and he closed his statement by referring to 2nd Timothy, II. 15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

It was a challenge that Ritter could not refuse and so he immediately wrote back to the new editor of the **Telescope**, William Handby, who was also born in Washington County, Pennsylvania, as follows:

Brother Handby:

After reading the 112 number of the **Telescope**, I discovered an article by J. C. Winter in which my name and communication was called into question. . . . . He refers back to a time 38 years ago. Now brother what kind of times existed in Zion's church 38 years ago, I am not prepared to say. The members that then composed the Church are either dead or moved away. . . . . I do not want my brother to suppose that I think myself better than those old fathers to whom he refers. I have ever considered them as faith-

1. **Religious Telescope**, April 17, 1839.



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ful servants of God. But it is nevertheless well known that they did not enforce discipline to that extent that the General Conference has made it our duty to do.

Though this circuit has been kept up for upwards of thirty years, when I came to it last spring, I could not find but ten or twelve disciplines among upwards of three hundred members, and some of them did not know that we had a discipline.

.....Again Brother Winter says in an indirect manner that preachers need not concern themselves as to the manner in which they decorate their bodies. There are many more just like Brother Winter. Say nothing about superfluity, drunkenness, or oppression and all is right. But if we will turn our minds to the word of the Lord we will find that it is our duty to preach against sin of every kind...

I will close by recommending to our Brother Winter that he read the third chapter of Isaiah, and remain a true lover of consistancy.

Jacob Ritter  
Washington Circuit, Pa.  
April 26th, 1839.<sup>1</sup>

As would be expected, it was not long until a return article was sent to the editor of the **Telescope**, and as a heading for his response, J. C. Winter quoted the following scripture, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred wherewith."

The letter then read as follows:

Brother Handby:

I deem it my duty to publish a reply through the medium of the 'Telescope' to a communication written by Jacob Ritter under

1. **Religious Telescope**, June 12, 1839.

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the date 26th of April, 1839. . . . . In the first place, I think Brother Ritter has been very uncharitable in claiming my communication as aiming entirely at him, and left no part of it to the Brethren in Ohio, for whose benefit it was particularly designed, excepting that part which immediately refers to his communication.

Secondly, I will answer his question, 'What kind of times existed in Zion's Church 38 years ago'? The society was organized at that time by Father Pframer (Pfrimmer) and flourished with members **agreeing together**. This was about the time of the wonderful falling away of the Presbyterians, which also found way in our society often, during sermons, delivered by the old fathers, while the power of God was displayed in the preaching of the word, causing numbers of the persons to fall to the floor in the congregation as if dead. Then mourners benches were in great demand, and preachers were not heard boasting of what **they had done**, but gave God the honor, to whom all glory, honor, and praise belongeth. Next I will note the seeming 'neglect of the old fathers for not enforcing the discipline to that extent.' As an apology for them you will recollect that previous to the year 1815, there was no discipline for to enforce except that great discipline called the Bible, which they strictly observed and commanded their hearers to observe.<sup>1</sup> He also

1. This statement was true in the eyes of the Ohio Brethren who did not accept the 1813 discipline as being official, since it was the product of the old Hagerstown Conference, and not the result of a General Conference. The first General Conference Discipline was produced in the year 1815.

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says that 'This circuit was kept for upward of 30 years.' Certainly Brother Ritter should have known better, for that circuit was only organized about twelve years ago; although Zion's Church has been kept as a regular preaching place ever since the time above mentioned, and the Muskingum Conference once met in that neighborhood at the home of Daniel Rice. . . . . Next and lastly he says, 'There are many more just like Brother Winter. Say nothing about superfluity, drunkenness, or oppression and all is right.' In writing this sentence Brother Ritter made himself chargeable to the next annual conference. In conclusion, I will inform Brother Ritter that I took the third chapter of Isaiah into consideration and found exactly what is wrong with him which will be read in the last part of the 12th verse of said chapter. 'They which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths' . . . . .

In the first place I say again that Zion's Church was kept as a regular preaching place until the year 1827, when it was taken in the circuit and remains so to this day. I will here mention that Father Winter was born near the place where Zion's Church now stands and resided there until the year 1837. In the year 1808, he began to preach in Zion's Church and other places.

In the year 1827, he organized the Washington Circuit without the help of any other preacher. Shortly afterwards he stated in the east that there were between four hundred and five hundred members on the Washington Circuit. If Brother Ritter is right in giving



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the number of members, that society must be on the retrograde ever since the young preachers were sent there.<sup>1</sup>

I will say but little concerning the judgment which Brother Ritter passed upon the members of that circuit as regard experimental religion, having ascertained the manner in which he did it, proves clearly that he only guessed at it. The reason being that the members were not used to the rules which he introduced and consequently they did not render him the same satisfaction they would otherwise have done. A great many had been Lutherans, and some Presbyterians, and some Mennonites; their children and others were converted under Father Winter's preaching and were added to the Church. They did not like the idea of having a separate plank for the mourners bench, neither did they like the class meetings, and the discipline at that time said that where the majority of the members were in favor of class meetings there it should be attended to. So Father Winter thought it would be improper to destroy them by introducing non-essentials, but his desire was to have their souls saved. He distributed as many disciplines as he could get which were but few, it is true.

Yours in the bonds of Christian Fellowship.

Farewell

John C. Winter<sup>2</sup>

1. It may be mentioned here that very few churches kept church records in that day, and that Ritter always insisted on keeping a record with his church members named thereon. So it is not necessarily true that there were fewer members. Ritter was probably mentioning recorded names.
2. **Religious Telescope**, July 3, 1839.

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These communications present a true and vivid picture of the conditions of Allegheny Conference in these early days. Saving souls was the chief interest of the fellowship, and the keeping of church records was frowned upon much more than it was advocated. We are reminded of the Biblical statement, "Each man did what was right in his own sight." Such a state of affairs naturally led to confusion, and it took strong characters, who were willing to receive criticism, to bring about order and stability in this youthful organization.

### Liquor and the Early Church

In the communications mentioned above, the drinking of whiskey was mentioned. At this time drinking was quite prevalent among the early settlers. From the statements of history it is evident that most of the Westmoreland and Washington County settlers had their own stills. Even as late as 1831 there is the following quotation from the Virginia Conference minutes:

The Conference agreed after due deliberation that Conrad Weast quit selling liquor and preach more than he has done; if not, his license shall be demanded and he shall be a member of the United Brethren in Christ no longer.<sup>1</sup>

Drinking was common among all the church memberships of this pioneering America. But it was during the days of the beginnings of Allegheny Conference that our own church, and others as well became seriously concerned, and began to legislate against it.

At the General Conference in 1833 there was stated:

Should any exhorter, preacher, or elder, from and after the next annual Conference

1. Drury, A. W., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 339.

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in 1834, be engaged in the distillation or vending of ardent spirits, he shall for the first and second offense be accountable to the quarterly or yearly conference of which he is a member. Should he continue to act in the same way—he will for the time, not be considered a member of this church.<sup>1</sup>

But it will be noticed that even here the reference was to the making and selling of ardent spirits, and not to the drinking of them.

With this in mind the following apology of Jacob Ritter to the Brethren of the United Brethren in Christ Church is both highly illuminating, and pathetically humorous. His courage in making such a statement to the entire denomination speaks for the moral earnestness, humility, and strength of this young minister. It also gives a very vivid picture of some of the social conditions of Western Pennsylvania.

Brother Handby:

It has been published in the Religious Telescope, by some person, that I drank whiskey with the members on the Washington Circuit; and, lest the people might think that I advocate the cause of whiskey or intemperance, I would inform you as to the reverse. It is true, brother, that there were many whiskey drinkers or tipplers on Washington Circuit, which is well known. The bottle was frequently presented to me, and (as I acknowledged to my brother before) I confess I did merely taste whiskey once or twice since I experienced religion, and this I did with the greatest reluctance for I never in all my life could countenance the drinking of ardent spirits, unless used as a medicine; and though

1. Op. Cit., p. 339



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I inadvertantly tasted whiskey, I have said, and say again that it was a fault in me, and would be a fault in any person, for I believe, like Brother Handby, that the day is come that ministers of the gospel and lay members also are inexcusable for using spirituuous liquors as an idle drink. And I have raised and do still intend to raise my voice against such a satanic evil. I ask forgiveness for the above misdemeanor.

Yours in the bonds of love,  
J. Ritter.

Mt. Pleasant, Pa., June 4th, 1840.<sup>1</sup>

### **Jacob Ritter and Church Organization**

The year following, in 1841, Jacob Ritter was appointed to the Westmoreland Circuit. Here he immediately clashed with George Waggoner, who had just been admitted to the Conference at the first meeting of Allegheny Conference. Mr. Waggoner was a local minister who resided in Westmoreland County. Like other ministers of his day, he found points of objection in the Church Discipline, and did not hesitate to take the pulpit and openly state that the United Brethren Discipline was in error. It is easily imagined that Jacob Ritter, with his love of church order and regulation immediately came into conflict with George Waggoner. The matter reached its peak when Waggoner seized the pulpit in the New Stanton meeting house and demanded the right to preach his gospel. Many of the people left the meeting with the result that Waggoner, himself, felt humiliated. After some time spent in an open feud, the following rather amusing letters appeared in the **Religious Telescope** under the heading of "Settlement of a Difficulty."

Dear Brother Handby:

The difficulties that have existed between

1. **Religious Telescope**, June 10, 1840.

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Mr. G. Waggoner and myself, for a considerable time, we close with the following statements:

Let justice be done to all men. After proper reflection, I feel free to confess that, under the momentary influence of excitement against Mr. G. Waggoner, in a communication dated Mt. Pleasant, Pa., 1841, headed "Beware of a bear in the bog or a snake in the grass," touching his course and conduct, I wrote more severely than I ought to have done. Mr. Waggoner wishes me to inform your readers, that, where I said he was forbidden the house by the persons mentioned, it was only their opinion or voice that was against him, and that it was not legal in view of the fact that it was a free house.

Jacob Ritter.

Mr. Handby:

I wish to inform your readers that the above statement of Mr. Ritter is satisfactory to me, I also, on my part, am willing to admit that I have indulged in private conversations on our difficulties both with improper feelings and language. Although we disagree in our opinions on church government, yet we both wish to cultivate peace and therefore thus mutually agree, through the medium of your paper, to publish our sentiments.

George Waggoner

Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

Dec. 2nd., 1841. 1

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It will immediately be noticeable that Ritter was apologizing only on the basis of where the incident took place. It was in an open meeting house where all thoughts could be expressed. Had it been in a church building owned by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, then his remarks would have stood unaltered.

At the next meeting of the Annual Conference George Waggoner was expelled, probably as a result of his opposition to the church organization movement. He was later reinstated, and moved westward as a church missionary. The official minutes of the Allegheny Conference meeting of 1852 read that George Waggoner "feels to be impressed to be a missionary to Oregon or California." His son, George Waggoner, Jr., became one of the outstanding ministers of the Allegheny Conference and lost his life in the Johnstown flood.

### Jacob Ritter as Presiding Elder and Author

In 1842, Dr. Ritter was elected Presiding Elder of the Conference in the Westmoreland District. His influence immediately was felt in the expansion of the Conference, and its growing program of education. He makes an interesting comment concerning his work as Presiding Elder in 1845, when he wrote, "I have traveled over three thousand miles. My beast has been worn down, but the good Lord has been good to me,—I am four pounds heavier than at any former time in my life." <sup>1</sup>

It was during this year, 1845, that he found time to complete his **Sketch Book**, the first book published in the denomination that was intended to instruct young ministers in the art of ministering to their congregations. The writer searched the libraries of both

1. **Religious Telescope**, January 9, 1845.



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the Bonebrake Theological Seminary, and the Publishing House without being able to locate a copy of it. Upon returning home to the Allegheny Conference area, he was able to locate it in the library of Rev. T.W. Burgess, retired minister, who gave 52 years of active service to the Allegheny Conference. The book was recommended to young ministers by Bishops J. J. Glosbrenner, Henry Kumler, Sr., and John Russell, and by George Bonebrake, Alexander Biddle, and J. R. Sitman. An advertisement for the sale of the book appeared in the **Religious Telescope** stating:

### For sale at this office.

'Ritter's advice and sketch book,' designed for the use of ministers, leaders, stewards, and church members. Prices retail 31 cents a copy for pamphlet form—62 cents for those bound in leather. <sup>1</sup>

A reproduction of the title page will appear on the next page of this volume.

The book covered advice on Manners, on Redeeming Time, on Discipline, on Health, on Water or Christian Baptism, on Dress, and on most problems a minister could be expected to meet. Especially interesting is a Sabbath School address given before a Sabbath School some time before 1845. A quotation from this address will be of interest to us today.

The duty of teachers. 1. Teach the children to spell or read. 2. To reverence the Sabbath. 3. To honor their parents. 4. To obey the laws of the land. 5. To fear God, which is the beginning of all wisdom. <sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, May 20, 1846.
2. Ritter, Jacob, **A Sketch Book**, p. 207, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Clyde & Williams (1845).

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The following advice, which he gave to preachers' wives, reflects the picture of the life of the early traveling minister who was privileged to be at home only rarely during the months of his evangelistic travels:

When your husband is absent, you should use all the economy possible; if you have children, form a discipline, and make your word law amongst them. If disobedient do not spare the rod of correction, (during your husband's absence) when necessary. Yet as children are affectionate, and possess a teachable disposition, try to gain their affections, tell them the business your husband (their father) is on, tell them the story of the cross, tell them God is love, and Jesus died for them, and that if they are good children, that God, angels, and all good people will love them, and that heaven shall at last be their home forever. When your husband returns home, let him find things in order, and meet him with all the affections of a lovely wife, and, should it so happen that your husband had to labor amongst the poorer class, and become almost or altogether penniless, remember the gospel must be preached to the poor; and do not fret yourself about what you shall eat or drink, or wherewithall ye shall be clothed. The God that bade your

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## SIXTY ODD SKELETONS

in the form of

## A SKETCH BOOK :

By the Rev. Jacob Ritter,  
of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the  
United Brethren in Christ

---

This work contains an interesting advice to young  
ministers: also, a sermon in the form of a re-  
ply to Rev. Mr. Galy, of the Union Re-  
formed Calvinistic Church, upon the  
subject of Shouting, &c. &c.

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The Lord gave the word, great was the company of  
those that published it.—Psalm 68:11.

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HARRISBURG:

Published by Clyde & Williams.

1845.



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husband go preach the gospel to every creature will provide. <sup>1</sup>

Again under the heading of "Don't make Religion a Burden." he says:

Don't preach, if possible, more than twice a day, and let that be done in the demonstration of the spirit, and of power; for one warm spiritual sermon, if well digested, will result in more good than a dozen of cold milk, and water sermons. Let me then beg of you, my dear brethren, not to preach too frequently, nor too lengthy, and thereby burden your mind and worry your body and congregation. In visiting from house to house, as the apostles did, Acts 5:42, do not tarry too long, so that you may meet a hearty reception more than once; in family devotion, especially in the morning, when the family wishes to be about their business, do not burden them by sitting half an hour hunting a chapter, and selecting a hymn, and then by reading the longest chapter and hymn in the books, and singing the latter, then praying as long as the moral law. Come brethren, be consistent, remember what the poet says,

Short duties keep the attention up,  
And make devotion sweet.

In opening a love feast, do not exhort one hour, nor yet an half hour; state the object of the meeting, tell the leading features of your experience, and give liberty to others, &c. <sup>2</sup>

It was during the year of the publication of the **Sketch Book** that Dr. Ritter moved to Shellsburg intending to both "serve the church and practice medi-

1. Ritter, Jacob, *Op. cit.*, pp. 209-210.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

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cine, and shall be thankful for and punctual to all calls connected with my business." Financial necessity had forced him to use his medical ability partially to care for the needs of his family. Possibly his need of funds to publish his **Sketch Book** also entered into his decision. However, the next year he was again in full time work as the pastor of the Johnstown First Church. It was during his pastorate there that the church building was completed.

### **Jacob Ritter as a Promoter of Education**

Because of his insistence for a college, the Conference of 1847 felt that he should be the man to solicit funds for the new institution. He secured five thousand dollars for Mt. Pleasant College during this year of service, and then returned to Johnstown as pastor. However, his financial problems forced him once more to locate, this time at Liverpool, where he became a full time member of the medical profession, although still active in his Church and Sunday School leadership. The year of his locating was 1850.

His report to the Conference as agent for the Mt. Pleasant College gives us a very definite picture of the conference at this time (1847). It read as follows:

Brethren of the Conference, we have no reason to be discouraged, for it is but a few years since we organized in these mountains, at which time we had to hear the lion and hear the yell of the panther; had but a few members, some two or three circuits, half a meeting house, and a few preachers; but few as they were, they felt their commission written in letters of fire on their hearts, and, under God we have prospered. We have at present more than fifty preachers, about thirty meeting houses, twelve circuits, two stations, one mission, about four thousand

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members, and at the present have invitations from the state of New York, and in almost every conceivable direction, and to some of the greatest cities of our Union. <sup>1</sup>

Following his moving to Liverpool in 1850, Dr. Ritter became eminently successful as a physician. But always in his heart there was a definite longing for the pastoral work which he had been obliged to leave because of his financial necessities.

Five years after he "located," or retired from the full time ministry, Jacob Ritter returned to the Allegheny Conference convention that was held in the town of Tyrone during the month of January. He found 38 of the brethren present, and was so deeply moved by the experience he had, as visitor coming back to the scene of his past labors, that he wrote a letter to the Religious Telescope that will stand as one of the finest pieces of literature ever penned by a member of our Conference, or of the Church. It read thus:

Five years having passed since I was present in the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, on entering the conference room, and in recognizing the good brethren with whom I had shared the joys and sorrows of an Itinerant life in the days of other years, and in contemplating the changes that have taken place during my absence, my heart was overwhelmed, and I shed tears of joy mingled with sorrow. Oh, how vividly did the days of other years crowd in upon my mind. The General and Annual Conference, the communion season, the prayer and classroom, and the great congregation, the cry of the mourner, the tears and shouts of the redeemed and then the responsibility of my calling came down

1. Religious Telescope, November 17, 1847.



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upon me like a hail storm. The time I have murdered, the talent buried took fast hold upon me, so that sometimes I was almost speechless. Finally the appointments were read off. I sat, with a few pills in my pocket, and worse than a fly blister burning my heart. Fain would I have given a word of caution to my brethren against locating, but my heart was too full. Let me say here, that although I was literally starved off the field, yet I have regretted a thousand times that I have located. Since that hour my season has been a rough one, and although I still try to preach and heal the sick, and often do some good, I hope, in talking and praying with the dying, yet the command "Go ye therefore into the world and preach the gospel" is ever before me. Brethren, called of God to the ministry, do not locate. . . . Pray for me, Brethren, that I may yet be delivered and brought out to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

Jacob Ritter

Liverpool, Perry County, Pa. 1

From that period on Jacob Ritter served as a medical doctor, and carried on an intensive work of Christian leadership in his community.

On the morning of February 4, 1901, having reached the age of 85 years, 10 months, and 6 days, this veteran of the Cross entered into the eternal presence of our Father in heaven. He was the last surviving member of the first Allegheny Conference session. He died at Liverpool, Pennsylvania. His body sleeps in the beautiful little cemetery of that mountain town.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, January 30, 1855.

2. **Weekly**, W. M., and Fout, H. H., **Our Heroes**, p. 93.

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With this story of Allegheny Conference's first great leader having been told, we turn now to the history of the Conference itself.

It is not definitely known who served as Presiding Elder during the first year of the Conference. There is no record of one having been elected at the 1838 session of Pennsylvania Conference, when the Allegheny Conference was formed. The fact that Harmonious Ow was the first chairman, serving at the 1839 conference meeting, may indicate that he was serving as the Presiding Elder during the year, but the evidence is so inconclusive, that there is no basis for an absolute conclusion. We do know that at the first separate Allegheny Conference session, John R. Sitman was elected Presiding Elder, apparently her first superintending officer.

The first mention we have of the newly formed Conference was made in the May thirtieth, 1838, issue of the **Religious Telescope**, when it was stated that:

A camp meeting will be held on the Huntingdon circuit six miles south of Bellefonte on the land of Martin Houser; commencing on the 24th of August. Also one on the Clearfield Circuit near Johnstown; commencing on the 7th of September. Also one near Philipsburg; commencing on the 14th of September.

### Early Church Discipline

The first meeting of the Allegheny Conference convened at Mt. Pleasant. Before noticing the minutes of that meeting, it would be well to note a few quotations from the 1837 Discipline, under which the Conference was operating at this time.

The size of the 1837 Discipline was three and one-half inches by four and three-fourth inches, and con-

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tained 64 pages. It was all in English, in contrast to the 1819 Discipline, which paralleled the German and the English, in polyglot Bible style, and to the earlier disciplines, which were printed in both English and German, as has been before noted.

The duties of the church officers of this period are well worth our notice. The duties of the Presiding Elders and the preachers were as follows, as recorded on pages 24 and 25 of the 1837 Discipline.

Presiding Elders, election and duty.

Qst. How are the presiding elders elected?

Ans. The Bishops shall propose to the Conference some of the Elders who have stood their time of probation and with the consent of the Conference, elect them for one year.

Qst. What are the duties of the Presiding Elder?

Ans. 1. To travel through the district appointed him and preach as often as he can.

2. He shall take charge of the traveling and local preachers in his district, and see that they conduct themselves as becometh the gospel of Christ.

3. He shall appoint the quarterly and camp meetings, and if possible attend them; he shall administer the Lord's Supper and hold quarterly meeting conferences with the preachers, exhorters, leaders and stewards; he shall further inquire into, and examine whether the traveling and local preachers do their duty, particularly whether the local preachers, when practicable,



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preach every Sunday, and where there are more than one, to change them at times, where the most benefit is likely to result; and to exhort them, that they maintain discipline and order, love and seriousness in the societies.

4. He shall also, in conjunction with two elders, preachers, exhorters or leaders,- (one from each circuit) change the preachers on his district. Should any circuit be found without a traveling preacher, it shall be his duty to employ a preacher to travel on that circuit, until the next annual conference.

5. And should it so happen that a district should be without a Presiding Elder, information thereof should immediately be given the Bishop, who shall appoint an Elder in the district to act as Presiding Elder until the ensuing conference.

Qst. What are the duties of the circuit preacher?

Ans. To submit peaceably to the station appointed him by Conference. . . .

### First Annual Session of the Allegheny Conference

The records of the first meeting of the Allegheny Conference, as taken from both the **Religious Telescope** and the Conference Secretary's record, are as follows:

The Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ convened in Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania, on the 25th day of March A. D. 1839.

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The Conference was opened by Bishop Erb reading the sixth chapter of 2nd Corinthians, and prayer. The following preachers were present.

Jacob Erb, Bishop	
Harmon Ow, Chairman	
John R. Sitman, Secretary	
Joseph Sumbro	George Miller
John Rathfon	John Wallace
Adolphus Henendon	William Beighel
(Harndon)	
Daniel Worman	Isaac Coomes
Martin Houser	Jacob Ritter
Henry Metzker	Wm. B. Lewis

### Absentees

Peter Swarts	Abraham Harner
David Harner	John P. Fouts
Wm. Cramer	David Flick
Matthias Cline	John Rider
Richard Cattor	James Alway
Henry Cephart (Kephart)	Joshua Barger
Christian Gramling	David Rouch
Moses R. Lawson	

### Monies received by the preachers:

	Salary	Expenses	Presents	Deficiencies
Jacob Ritter	\$131.47	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$34.53
John Wallace	66.50			20.00
John Rathfon	137.75	7.00	7.75	29.25
Moses R. Lawson	66.50	15.00		24.50
William Beighel	86.92	4.85	17.63	
George Miller	97.09	5.69	5.64	62.91
A. Harnden	50.54		43.95	29.46
Isaac Coombs	112.18	9.91	5.67	57.71
J. R. Sitman	155.58	15.72	7.50	20.14

Sum total of deficiencies \$196.50

Conference collections, \$14.26      Interest Donation, \$16.43  
 Interest Benevolent Fund, \$22.00

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

Q. Have all the preachers' characters been examined?

A. This was strictly attended to by calling over their names.

Q. Who have located this year?

A. Moses R. Lawson.

Q. Have any of the preachers died the last year?

A. None.

Q. Who are candidates for the ministry?

A. Martin G. Miller	Abraham Zumbro
George Waggoner	John L. Baker

Q. Have any been ordained to the office of Elder?

A. None.

Q. Have any withdrawn this year?

A. Martin Hartman.

Q. Have any been expelled this year?

A. John P. Fouts for deviating from the doctrine of the United Brethren in Christ.

Resolved that David Runk be continued in his present standing for one year. He shall be accountable to this conference for his further usefulness in the ministry.

Q. Where have the preachers been stationed this year?

A. Allegheny District.	John R. Sitman P. E.
Juniata Circuit	John Rathfon
Washington do	Jacob Ritter Ch.
	Adolphus Henendon
Westmoreland do	George Miller
Clearfield do	Isaac Coombs
Huntingdon do <sup>1</sup>	John Wallace Ch.
	Wm. Beighel

1. "Do" was used at this time in place of our present ditto marks ("")



## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

Q. Where shall our next Allegheny Conference be held?

A. Antis Church, Huntingdon County, Pa.,  
February 24th, 1840.

Resolved—That we do not deem it expedient to lecture on the abolition question at our circuit appointments. Notwithstanding, we believe that it is proper to reprove the sin of slavery as well as other evils. But, if any brother shall feel it is his duty to lecture on the said subject, he shall have the privilege to make an appointment for that purpose, provided, that he does not thereby neglect his regular preaching places.<sup>1</sup>

### Ministerial Salaries in 1838

The amounts paid for salary are especially interesting. A few years later it was raised from \$80 to \$100 for single men, and from \$160 to \$200 for married men. While this seems to us to be unusually low, as indeed it was, nevertheless it is well to note that teacher's salaries at that time were correspondingly low.

In Connecticut in 1838, the salary of men teachers was \$14.50 a month, and of women, \$5.75 a month. In addition to this, it must be remembered that the average teaching term of that period was about 6 months.<sup>2</sup> In Allegheny Conference territory there was a school known as the "Old Red School House," located near the Barren Run Church in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, that was also erected in the year 1838. Nicholas Shirey, Jr., was the first teacher and received a salary of \$12 a month.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Religious Telescope*, May 15, 1839.

2. Barnard, Henry, *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 5, pp. 152—153.

3. Milligan, Ella Metsker, *Christian Metzger*, p. 462, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Incorporated (1942).

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

### Early Conference Limitations

It will be apparent from the reading of the minutes that the Conference was divided into 5 large circuits and 1 district. It is the opinion of the writer that the Allegheny District was so designated to include the whole of Allegheny Conference as a Presiding Elder's District. This would meet the technical requirements of naming a Presiding Elder's District. While it is probable that the Presiding Elder served several congregations in the neighborhood of his residence, we have no positive proof that this was true.

It must be kept constantly in mind, in considering the early days of our Conference life, that there were very few church buildings on these circuits. Instead of church buildings there were dozens of home appointments that were covered by the circuit rider once every several months. As late as 1851, when the first statistical report of the number of appointments on each circuit was issued, the average charge listed 10 or more appointments to the circuit, and of the 16 ministers given work, 1 had 18 appointments to fill, and another had 20.

It is easily seen that the class leader was a man of great importance to the Church of this early day. He was definitely what the title of his office implied, the leader of the class, or the appointment. During the absence of the preacher, he was the one who led in the spiritual life of the Church.

The 5 circuits that included the entire territory of the Allegheny Conference at the time of the 1839 meeting were large and scattered. A map is given at the beginning of this chapter which attempts to give the boundaries of the 5 circuits. Because of the little information that is available of the early appointments, a perfect circuit map is impossible. This map merely endeavors to portray, as nearly as possible, the picture

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of the territory it was necessary for the early circuit rider to cover. Even today there is wilderness territory in every section where the Conference extends. In that day of dirt roads, mountain trails, and lurking panthers, the preacher must have been taxed to the utmost of his strength as he forded the streams, broke through the snow drifts, and tramped over the almost impassable muddy trails. The 350 miles Jacob Ritter mentions as composing the distance of the Washington Circuit were only a little more than the average circuit mileage of that day. Notwithstanding the size of the circuits, there were still other localities pleading for ministerial care from the Allegheny Conference. As will be noticed from the map, "Allegheny Conference in 1838," all the territory allotted to the Conference was not occupied. In addition to this, it has been noted before that in 1847, Jacob Ritter mentioned that there were invitations from the state of New York. But the settlements in these sections of the country were so sparse that they could be ministered to only through the aid of appropriation money, and this was almost impossible to get in that day of beginnings.

### Ministers of 1841

What are the characteristics of the first ministers of Allegheny Conference? Very fortunately, there is a brief description of most of the active men given in the **Religious Telescope** by one of the ministers of the Conference, William Beighel. It is a clear cut description written in a way that shows the intimacy of the "brethren" in that day.

Brother Miller, our presiding elder (1840) is quite a young man, but the masterly ability with which he develops the treasures of a richly stored mind, would do honor to one



## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

twice his years and experience.<sup>1</sup> Brother Sidman, (Sitman) when he takes the stand as a speaker, is welcomed by the people with a cordial and heartfelt satisfaction. Brother Ritter is well received as a speaker. His preaching is forcibly effective, and pointed, sometimes diversified with an anecdote, highly amusing, and oft times irresistably forceful. Brother Harndon does not keep aloof when preaching; it is by close quarters that he does execution. Brother Wallace's mind is a sun reflecting light upon all subjects. His remarks are always common sense, dignified, and to the point. Brother Williby is a young man but an exceedingly pleasing declaimer. Brother Baker bids fair to be useful. Brother Crowl we would have to ask how he is getting along; we have not heard him since he was taken into the Conference. Brother Snider is always on the wing. Brother Elway and Brother Catlow are able and distinguished. . . We cannot pass without noticing Father Rider and Father Owe (Ow). No, their names are dear to us; they enlisted in a holy war many years ago, but they do not appear to abate in their zeal or relax in their efforts to do good.<sup>2</sup>

1. George Miller began his ministry at the age of 23, in the year 1833. He served for 2 years as Presiding Elder in Allegheny Conference, then transferred back to Pennsylvania Conference as minister to the Chambersburg Station. He later became pastor of the Otterbein Church in Baltimore. In 1851 he emigrated to Iowa and was stationed that year in Muscatine. In 1852 he became the Presiding Elder. Ill health compelled him to leave the ministry in 1858, while serving the Lisbon station. In 1860, in the fiftieth year of his life, he entered into the eternity of God.
2. **Religious Telescope**, December 8, 1841.



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William Beighel was a young minister, only 22 years of age, at the time in which he penned this description. He was always one of the most aggressive ministers of the Conference. A very fine description of him appears in Rev. S. E. Cormany's **History of the Mt. Pleasant Church of the United Brethren in Christ**. It reads as follows:

Rev. Wm. Beighel was a remarkable man for earnestness and fiery zeal. His discourses and exhortations were often startling, and would likely be considered more so today. He was known as 'the hell and damnation preacher.' An incident is related by one of the converts of that meeting, (the great revival of 1840) and corroborated by others, that on one occasion he stood upon the 'mourners' bench' and very earnestly exhorted people to repent, urging the unconverted to immediate decision and action, using this most touching appeal as a climax. 'If fifty years hence I were to come here to take the names of all now present, many of you would not be here. If I were to then go to heaven and ask for your names, I would not find them all there, but if I should go down to hell, I would find you there, because you refused to come out and seek the Lord, and you would cry, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved,' and your pleading would be like the rich man's,—for one drop of water to cool your parching tongue,—all because you had rejected the offers of mercy.<sup>1</sup>

These were the men who opened the ministerial program of Allegheny Conference. Youthful, frank, open, enthusiastic, and energetic, they paved the road

1. Cormany. S. E., **History of the Mt. Pleasant Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 22.

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

for those who were to follow and build greater churches. But the achievements of these men, while they were equalled by others who came to carry on their work, were never excelled.

### Second Annual Session of Allegheny Conference

On the twenty-fourth of February, 1840, the Conference met for the second time. Their year of probation was over, and they were now more cognizant of their abilities, and needs. Particularly worthy of our notice is their formation of a "Home Missionary Society." Its organization at this early date is a high tribute to the vision of these early church fathers. The following is the account of the Conference as given in the **Religious Telescope**:

The Allegheny Conference of the Church convened in Antis Church, Huntingdon County,<sup>1</sup> Pa., on the 24th of February, 1840. The following members were present. vis

Jacob Erb, Bishop.  
Harmonious Ow, Chairman.  
George Miller, Secretary.

#### Preachers present.

John R. Sitman	James Elway
Richard Catlow	Henry Kephart
Jacob Ritter	John Wallace
Adolphus Harnden	David Runk
George Waggoner	Martin Houser
Wm. Beighel	John L. Baker
Christian Crumling	Isaac Coons
John Rider	

#### Preachers absent.

Joseph Zumbro	Wm. Cramer
Abraham Zumbro	Mathias Cline
W. B. Lewis	Martin G. Miller

1. Huntingdon County was divided in 1846, and the Antis Church is now located in the later formed Blair County.

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Henry Metzgar

Daniel Worman

Joseph Berger

David Fleck

Peter Swartz

Abraham Harner

David Harner

John Rathfon

Q. Have all the preachers' characters been examined?

A. This was strictly attended to by calling their names.

Q. Have any located this year?

A. John Rathfon, and transferred to the Pennsylvania Conference.

Q. Have any of the preachers died during the past year?

A. None.

Q. Who are candidates for the ministry?

A. Charles Crowl

John Ellenbarger

Isaiah Bartto

Abraham Winter 1

Q. Are any to be ordained to the office of Eldership?

A. Richard Catlow

James Elway

William Beighel

Adolphus Harnden

Isaac Coons

1. Abraham Winter was the son of Jacob Winter. It immediately appears in the reading of the next Conference minutes that he was of the old school who did not believe in the organization of classes. It will be remembered that while his father had done excellent work in organizing the Washington Circuit, he would not leave a class record. In our Church organization, Christian Newcomer sewed leaves of paper together to form a class book in 1817, recording the names of five charter members at the Greencastle, Pa. Church. In 1816 he organized a class at the Herrs appointment in Lancaster County. These were the first organized classes. But numbering people was still held in much disfavor in the Church at this time (1840). The more progressive Allegheny Conference expelled Abraham Winter for his non-conformance to the organization movement at the 1841 Conference. He was later reinstated and became a teacher at Otterbein College.

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

Q. Have any withdrawn this year?

A. None.

Q. Have any been expelled this year?

A. None.

Q. Where were the preachers stationed this year?

A. Westmoreland District.	G. Miller P.E.
Washington Circuit	David Runk
Allegheny do	A. Harnden
Westmoreland do	J. Ritter
Clearfield do	I. Coons
Huntingdon do	John Wallace
	John L. Baker
Juniata do	Wm. Beighel
Jefferson Mission	John R. Sidman,
	and also to preside
	over Juniata Circuit.

Q. Where shall our next conference be held?

A. In Bellefonte, Center Co., Pa., March 15, 1841.

The following brethren were put in nomination, as, candidates for delegates to the General Conference, viz: John R. Sidman, Harmonious Ow, George Miller, Jacob Ritter, and John Rider.

**Resolved** that Samuel Shupe, and David Keister of Mt. Pleasant receive the returns of the election and inform the persons elected.

**Resolved** upon the whole, that we approve of the course of our brethren Jacob Ritter, A. Harnden, and George Miller persued by them in reference to the reorganizing the societies on the Washington society according to discipline.



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**Resolved** on motion, that a Home Missionary Society be formed and a committee of three appointed to draft a Constitution and report to Conference immediately. Whereupon Richard Catlow, George Waggoner, and J. Ritter were appointed said committee, and whereupon the following Constitution was presented and adopted.

Article 1st. This society shall bear the name of the "Home Missionary Society of the Allegheny Conference of the United Brethren in Christ."

Article 2nd. The funds of this society and all other concerns thereof, are to be directed and managed by a board of five trustees, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum to transact business entrusted to the society.

Article 3rd. The first trustees are to be elected by this Annual Conference. This Conference shall annually elect a board of trustees for this society for one year, but the former trustees may be re-elected.

Article 4th. In case of death, resignation or expulsion of any member of the board of trustees, the president of the board shall call a meeting of the board when they shall fill the vacancy by electing another member from among the members of this society.

Article 5th. The trustees shall elect a president out of their own body, who shall preside and have the casting vote in all their proceedings and shall sign all official documents of the board.

Article 6th. The trustees shall appoint a treasurer who shall take charge of moneys of the society, and shall pay the same to such

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

persons who have written orders from the board of the trustees. But the funds shall only be appropriated to missionary purposes in the strict sense of the word.

Article 7th. A correct account of all the receipts and expenditures is to be kept by the treasurer, and annually transmitted to this Annual Conference.

### Section II

Article 1st. Every member of this society shall pay annually 12½ cents on or before the sitting of Conference into the funds of this society.

Article 2nd. The funds of this society shall be invested by the direction of the board of trustees as shall appear to them to be most safe and productive.

Article 3rd. The board of trustees shall annually direct the treasurer to pay over to the Conference such sums as may be at their command or disposal.

Article 4th. The Annual Conference shall distribute such as may appear to them most proper and beneficial by a committee of three selected by ballot.

Article 5th. The board of trustees shall have the power to adopt such other rules and their meetings.

Article 6th. The board of trustees shall have the power to adopt such other rules and regulations as may appear necessary for the welfare of the society provided such by-laws are not contrary to this Constitution.

Article 7th. This Annual Conference shall have power to alter and amend this Constitution provided that two-thirds of the members shall concur in agreeing to such amendment.

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

The following brethren were elected trustees by the Conference viz: Daniel Worman, George Barger, David Keister, Samuel Shupe, and William Cherry. (Not one of these men were appointed to charges, leading one to suspect that this movement was to be under the supervision of the "located" ministers.)<sup>1</sup>

It has probably been noticed in the reading of the register of ministers for these first two Conferences, that a large number of the men were absent from both Conferences. On closer examination, however, it will be noticed that all the men applying for work were present. The others were held to their homes by their places of employment. In most cases farming was the means of livelihood of these early ministers who were "located." When the Conference was held in the east, the eastern "located ministers" were present, such as C. Grumbling and Henry Kephart. When it was held in the west, Daniel Worman, Henry Metzker, and the Zumbros attended. Martin Houser is the one exception to this rule. He attended both the eastern and the western Conference sessions.

Two more circuits were added to the list of charges at this Conference, bringing the total number to eight. Nine ministers were now employed.

During the Conference year, Jacob Ritter wrote, reporting the dedication of the New Stanton Meeting House on the seventh of June, 1840. At first notice this would seem to be a United Brethren building, but from what Dr. Ritter said in regard to Mr. George Waggoner's preaching there, it would appear that this was a union church, open to several denominations for worship. Twelve hundred persons attended the dedication, and following this, protracted meetings were held. This was a usual custom that was observed in that day. In the nine days of evangelistic services that

1. **Religious Telescope**, April 1, 1840.

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

followed, sixty came forward to be prayed for, and twenty-six united with our Church, with more expecting to join soon. At the close of the campaign, seventeen were baptised by immersion by "a regular Baptist preacher, some of these joining the Baptist Church." Ritter then continued in his report:

Six by request were baptised by myself in the water, five by immersion and one by pouring. O may God baptise them all by the spirit of the Holy Ghost. But I would inform the Rev. Mr.—— that I prefer a spiritual religion on dry land!!!<sup>1</sup>

A little later the annual announcement of camp meetings was presented by the Presiding Elder, George Miller. It read as follows:

### Camp Meetings

Westmoreland Circuit, August 27th, 1840, about six miles west of West Newton on Brother Espy's land.

At the same time in Cambria County about twelve miles east of Johnstown, and ten miles south of Jefferson. We wish our brethren in the ministry to try if possible to attend the last named meeting as help will be much needed.

Also in Harmon's Bottom on the land of the Rev. John Rider, five miles west of Shellsburg, Bedford Co., commencing the third of September.

Also in Indian Creek Valley on the land of Brother Kerns six miles east of Connellsville, commencing on the seventeenth day of September.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, June 24, 1840.

2. **Ibid.**, August 4, 1841.



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The Camp Meeting during the fall months, and the Quarterly Conference Meeting during the winter and spring months, were the two outstanding gatherings for evangelistic purposes. The Camp Meeting continued to grow throughout the years of the nineteenth century, only to die because of the changing social conditions of the early twentieth century.

However, it must not be supposed that the old Camp Meeting was without its own weakness. It also had its criticisms, many of them well deserved. Even as early as 1840, it was seriously considered as to whether or not these meetings should be discontinued. The most insistent criticism was that, while they were well attended, they were becoming mere social gatherings. Ministers began to warn their people not to "sponge off" their host, but to bring food, straw, and cattle feed for themselves and for other guests. Otherwise they would be imposing on the good Christian farmer who would offer his land for their use, and find himself impoverished by their gluttony and selfishness. Then, too, camp followers would come well supplied with liquor, which they sold to all who would buy, thus causing riots and trouble among the attendants of the Camp Meeting.

Another problem arose from the number of ministers who attended the Camp Meeting. This was a day when all ministers enjoyed speaking and felt that they would be failing in their obligation to God if they did not speak at every possible occasion. Perhaps conditions have not changed so much, in this respect, to this day. The natural result was twofold. First, the surrounding churches suffered from a lack of ministerial leadership, since their ministers were all at the Camp Meeting. Second, the program was so crowded and oft times divided by divergent views that confusion of thinking often resulted.

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Because of this confusion, the following article appeared in the **Religious Telescope**, from the pen of Jacob Ritter, the Presiding Elder.

Dear Brethren,

Some time since, if I mistake not, I saw a piece written by a western brother who thought that it would be for the better if there were not so many preachers rushing to the same meeting.

I think two or three is enough to hold a quarterly meeting, and four or five will do more good at a camp meeting than twenty or thirty. This being the case, the church around need not suffer at the time and the minds of the Layety (laity) will not be so much divided, they will look more to God for help, therefore as long as I shall have to superintend great meetings, I shall make inquiry who will likely do the most good in the different places (notwithstanding I dearly love them all) I shall only invite such, and should any others come they shall meet a hearty reception, but I do not want them to come overwhelmed or half dead with the preaching fever and should it so happen that they cannot get an apartment, I do not want them to go off under a great load of temptation, and if they do they shall have to work out their own salvation the best way that they can.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, a fine work of evangelism was done at these meetings. The climax of their usefulness will be noticed elsewhere in this volume.

1. **Religious Telescope**, October 11, 1843.

## ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE

### Quarterly Conferences

Paralleling the work of the Camp Meeting was that of the Quarterly Conference. Quarterly Conference at this time meant "big meetings." The Conference Presiding Elder would come to the charge by arrangement and assist the pastor in conducting the meetings. Often the elder would open the meetings with a week of services and then go on to the next appointment to start another campaign, leaving the pastor to carry on as long as he saw fit. There were no outside evangelists brought into the Conference until the coming of the Parrett family in 1887. Until this time the Presiding Elder was the assisting evangelist to the pastor.

Sometimes these meetings were held in the afternoons, at other times they were held in the evenings, "by candle light." Generally speaking the candle light services were held in the churches and homes, while afternoon services were held in the barns and groves.

This interesting group of Quarterly Conference Appointments appeared in the **Religious Telescope** under the heading of Westmoreland District Quarterly Meeting Appointments:

New Stanton	April 14th.	Candle light
Mt. Pleasant	April 21st.	Candle light
Donegal	May 13th.	One O'clock
Wheeling Waters	May 17th.	One O'clock
Vances School House	May 20th.	One O'clock
Allegheny Circuit at Plains	June 3rd.	One O'clock
Westmoreland Circuit	June 10th.	One O'clock
Barren Run	June 17th.	One O'clock

J. E. Ritter, P. E.

### Later Annual Conferences

The third meeting of the Allegheny Conference was held at Bellefonte in the Bellefonte Meeting House. This was probably the oldest church building in the eastern section of our Conference. It was a log



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structure, erected in the year 1825.<sup>1</sup>

The Antis Church, where the Conference had met the preceding year, was built in the year 1832, and dedicated on the eighteenth of December, 1834.<sup>2</sup> While it was the oldest church building in the Altoona section of the Conference, there were older buildings both at Bellefonte, and in Washington and Westmoreland Counties. The Antis Church was located at Elizabeth Furnace, some five miles north of Altoona

The name of a new circuit appears on the records of the third convening of the Allegheny Conference in the Bellefonte Meeting House. It was the Susquehanna Mission. At this Conference, Abraham Winter and George Waggoner were expelled from the organization because of their non-conformance with the church organization movement. George Miller was named Presiding Elder of the West District, and Abraham Harner became the Presiding Elder of the newly formed Juniata District.

The fourth meeting of the Conference was commenced on the seventh of March, 1842, in the Mt. Pleasant Church. George Miller, the Presiding Elder, served as Bishop protempore in the absence of the secretary. Brother William Handby, Editor of the **Religious Telescope**, was present and opened the Conference by reading the twelfth Chapter of Romans and offering a prayer. There were 20 ministers present and 18 absent.

An unusual situation developed at this Conference session. The Pennsylvania Conference still had a very vivid remembrance of the little band of ministers who

1. Fulton, J. S., **History of the Allegheny Conference**, p. 204, Dayton, Ohio: Otterbein Press (1931).
2. Funk, Mary Gardner, **History of the First Church of the United Brethren in Christ at Altoona, Pennsylvania**, p. 1, Altoona, Pennsylvania: H. & W. H. Slep Press (1899).



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had so recently gone from their midst to form the Allegheny Conference. They also felt that these brethren, were in a sense, still a part of the original Conference and as such could be called to supply the pulpits of the Pennsylvania Conference. As a result, a call was issued to George Miller, the Presiding Elder of the Westmoreland District, to serve as the pastor of the Chambersburg Station. While it was a high tribute to the abilities of George Miller, it was also a hard blow to Allegheny Conference, for she was already greatly limited by a scarcity of traveling preachers. The minutes of the session spoke out against the action of the Pennsylvania Conference through the following resolution:

Resolved that this Conference hereby give Brother George Miller a transfer to the Pennsylvania Conference, provided he regains his health and is willing to supply the station allotted him by the Pa. A. (Annual) Conference. Resolved that in the opinion of this Conference the precedent taken by the Pennsylvania A. Conference as it regards the transfer and stationing of Brother Miller is altogether a transcendancy of their privilege although doubtless done with pure motives.<sup>1</sup>

Two new circuits were added at this Conference, Milheim Circuit and the Harrisburg Station.

It was at this session that J. B. Ressler was admitted to the Conference as a "minister on trial." He was later to have a great influence on the Conference and on the Church in general, serving with Mt. Pleasant College, Otterbein College, Bonebrake Theological Seminary (then Union Biblical), and Lebanon Valley College.

Jacob Ritter was elected Presiding Elder of the Westmoreland District, and John R. Sitman was elected Presiding Elder of the Huntingdon District.

1. Religious Telescope, April 13, 1842.

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For some unknown reason, there was no Bishop present at the 1842 session of the Conference, although Bishop Coons had been expected. It has been noticed that in the absence of a Bishop, George Miller had presided. Because of reasons that will be noted later, the Allegheny Conference voted to hold their Conference a month earlier, specifically during the first week of February. When Bishop Coons noted this change, he set the date forward again to March. This change resulted in a letter from the Western District Presiding Elder of the Conference, Jacob Ritter, who wrote to the **Religious Telescope**, as follows:

To Bishop Coons

In Behalf of Allegheny Conference.

Dear and Much Esteemed Brother in Christ.

In a recent number of the Telescope we have seen that you have altered the appointment of our Conference, and notwithstanding the Conference voted unanimously to have or to hold it a month earlier, and you yourself in a former number of the **Religious Telescope** expressed a desire that Conference would meet earlier, for reasons which you gave, yet you have altered our appointment contrary to your own wish and that of the whole Conference, as far as I have knowledge; and this you have done without so much as an apology. We hereby let you know that we are opposed to the alteration and are unwilling to comply, unless plausible reasons can be given.

As to the financial affairs of the Conference, we think there will be no difficulty.

As much as we would like to see you, we entertain no hope whatever of your being in attendance with us for this reason. The road

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was too long and difficult for you in your delicate state last spring, and this session you would have to go 180 miles further, in a very bad road at that.

Our reasons for wishing to meet on the first Monday of February are:

1st. Because our Conference is appointed at the eastern end of the district, and if the frost is out of the ground it will be almost impossible to travel so far, or at least a number will not go.

2nd. If we must meet in March, by the time we would get home, brethren with families must move, for the first of April would be here, hence you see that they would have no time to look out for themselves, and families.

3rd. Again as Brother Erb has been appointed our Bishop, and as his district is quite small, we think that if he makes his office or his duties the first matter, as he should do, we think our Conference can be held agreeable to his wish.

Will Brother Erb please tell us whether he will be in attendance with us or not. If not, we commend unto him the reading of the 15th section of the Discipline under page 36.

Yours with respect.

Jacob Ritter.<sup>1</sup>

The section of the Discipline that Dr. Ritter was referring to read as follows:

Question: How are the Bishops to be elected?

Answer: The General Conference shall elect them by a majority of votes; yet the Conference may at their option retain the former Bishop four years longer... The newly elected Bishop,

1. **Religious Telescope**, August 17, 1842.



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however, as well as those retained, must be capable of attending the Conferences appointed them; otherwise they cannot be elected.

In the following issue of the **Religious Telescope**, Bishop Coons answered Dr. Ritter by saying that he had consulted with the other three Bishops in making the appointment. Futhermore, he stated that no Conference could claim the Bishop as its own. The Church elected the Bishops, and then it was the duty of the Bishops to meet and divide the Conference work among them. There were no Bishop's areas, as we think of them today. He further went on to say:

So the United Brethren Church, or our entire people is our district, and we divide the work among ourselves, and if affliction or other unavoidable providential hindrances be the cause of our non-attendance, we are not to be censored or put out of office for it. I expect that Brother Erb will try to study Discipline, as you have directed him, so that he may be able to stand in his own defense. And if the next General Conference should elect you to the office of Bishop, Brother Ritter, you will find more difficulties than heretofore.<sup>1</sup>

Ritter made reply to Bishop Coons by stating at the last General Conference he had received the impression from both Bishop Erb and Bishop Coons that they were to have Bishop Erb for the Eastern Conferences, Coons taking the Middle Conferences, and Bishop Kumler taking the far Western Conferences. He further went on to say that he certainly meant no disrespect to Bishop Coons, but that he did feel that it was his duty to speak in behalf of his Conference, and the brethren in the ministry of Allegheny Conference. He

1. **Religious Telescope**, August 31, 1842.



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closed by stating:

I close by expressing a desire to the proper person to have our Conference held agreeable to our wish, as there is nothing definite in the Discipline as to who shall appoint the time of Conference. I remain Brother Coon's warmest friend in tribulation. <sup>1</sup>

Bishop Erb was present to preside at the 1843 Conference which opened its annual session at Liverpool, Perry County, Pennsylvania, on the third of March. He opened the Conference by the reading of the Twelfth Chapter of Romans, by singing, and prayer. John R. Sitman was elected Chairman, with Jacob R. Ressler the English Secretary and George Snyder the German Secretary. Nineteen ministers were present at the Conference, and twenty were absent. It was decided that the Conference would cooperate with the Pennsylvania Conference in securing subscriptions for the German paper, the **Busy Martha**, which that Conference was publishing.

A shortage of ministers was evidenced at this Conference. At the first Annual Conference, held only four years before, they had appointed eight men to work. At this Conference meeting, fifteen ministers were assigned work, with Jacob Ritter being forced to assume pastoral supervision of Mt. Pleasant and New Stanton, in addition to his duties as Presiding Elder of the Western District.

Jacob Ritter, in reporting the work of the Conference said:

All the unpleasant feelings that had existed in this Conference in reference to the Bishops was laid aside and we had a pleasant session. About a score or upwards were converted to God during the sitting, the brethren finally departing to meet their happy families.

1. *Op. Cit.*, September 14, 1842.

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ies, and their appointments. This leaving was like a mighty angel, flying in the midst of heaven with the everlasting Gospel, which is preached to the nations of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

### Changing Status of Presiding Elder

It would appear from the reading of the minutes and the **Religious Telescope** reports, that beginning with this Conference, the Presiding Elder was to be without a local appointment. Until this date he had been given a small district which he was to serve as pastor, in addition to his Presiding Elder duties. However, the scarcity of ministers before mentioned caused an adjustment to be made, and Dr. Ritter served the Mt. Pleasant and New Stanton Churches, in addition to acting as Presiding Elder.

It was not until the following Conference, which was held in Mt. Pleasant, that both Presiding Elders were completely without appointment. From this time forward the office of Presiding Elder became one of Conference leadership, with the Presiding Elders using all their efforts to promote the Conference program, and to serve as evangelists to all the churches under their supervision.

During the year 1842, Jacob Ritter reported that Madison had begun the building of a new church. This church building was completed in 1843, and Jacob Ritter, Presiding Elder, preached the dedicatory sermon. This sermon is included among the outlines given in **A Sketch Book**.<sup>2</sup> In writing to the **Religious Telescope** concerning the dedication, Dr. Ritter said:

I had the privilege of assisting in the dedication of the Madison Meeting House which was followed with a glorious revival, about which I expect Brother Beighel will give you

1. **Religious Telescope**, May 10, 1843.

2. Ritter, Jacob, **A Sketch Book**, p. 67.

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the particulars.<sup>1</sup>

The continuing growth and progress of the Conference was manifest in a letter from Jacob Ritter mentioning a trip to the central area of the Conference. He wrote as follows:

Brother Handby. Having just returned from the Eastern End of my District, although there were but few, I believe eight respectable accessions to the Church, yet I was pleased to meet with some of my old Fathers in Bedford County,—who nursed me when I first set up in the ministry, a few years ago, Father Ow and Rider moved to Bedford County at which time we were not known as a Church in that county. Through them and our Home Missionary operations there has been not only a number of souls converted to God, but many enterprising classes formed, and as the minutes of the conference show, the Jefferson end has been cut off from the Bedford Circuit (and named the Shellsburg Circuit). These brethren are wholehearted and do not get frightened when called upon to give ten or twenty dollars to support a good cause. On last year fifteen hundred dollars were raised on this circuit for meeting houses, preachers, missionary purposes, etc.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Need of an Educated Ministry Recognized and Expressed**

To meet the needs of this rapidly expanding Church, with a leadership that was adequately prepared and consecrated to the task of Christian leadership, became the most pressing problem of the early Church. Allegheny Conference was among the first to

1. **Religious Telescope**, November 8, 1843.

2. **Ibid.**, June 5, 1844.



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recognize it as such. The first daring statement upon the subject came, as might be expected, from the pen of Jacob Ritter. He wrote as follows:

On the whole, much as some are opposed to education, I cannot help but see the propriety of a well written or selected standard of Theology in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Jacob B. Ressler followed the leadership of his Presiding Elder by writing a very lengthy article under the heading, "A course of study needed." He said immediately that he thoroughly expected to receive much criticism, and that he would be labeled as one who is in favor of colleges and seminaries. He added that this is not necessarily so, but that he was decidedly in favor of education. He further stated that the Scriptures cannot be understood without a fair degree of education, and closed with the statement:

I would only suggest at present that our next General Conference adopt some efficient plan so as to specify definitely what works our young preachers shall study each year, for a definite number of years, and be examined as to their advancement annually.<sup>2</sup>

It was upon this suggestion that action was finally had that led to our reading course, which for many years enabled men who were not able to attend college, to prepare themselves for ordination.

In the same issue of the **Religious Telescope**, Jacob Ritter gave a masterful summation of the future potential work and program of the denominational church. It gives a vivid word picture of the conditions that obtained in Allegheny Conference, and in the Church in general in the year 1845. His words were as follows:

1. **Religious Telescope**, November 6, 1844.
2. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1845.



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1st. . . I wonder if it would not be good policy to have our Bishops travel through the church and do all they can for the printing office and our benevolent fund and make themselves extensively acquainted etc.

II They should be most spiritual and thorough going men, elected to preside, and there must be ample provision made in our next discipline for their support, which is not in the present one.

III All that will be received into the itineracy should be bound to move their families on their station or circuit for if it be our business to do all the good we can, it is evident that if a preacher lives forty to seventy miles away from his circuit, that he cannot be as useful to his family, and much less useful to the church than if he was settled on his circuit. If this was observed it would also destroy much jealousy for some must move and if one, why not all. This would also give the laity better opportunity to furnish us such things as will apply to our families, for money is a great object these times.

IV A brother that will not be directed by the Conference and is ashamed or too proud to take up a collection occasionally is not doing his duty according to our present discipline without any addition. . . . Our Local Brethren have their influence and cannot only preach but do much for the circuit preachers if determined.

V It should be made the duty of the church to buy or rent parsonage houses on every circuit. They should also move the preacher on the circuit. . . . .

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VI If a brother locate when in good health and of their own accord, they should have no claim on the benevolent funds; seeing that they love and have more confidence in the world than in God. It should also be the option of the Conference whether to receive them into the itineracy again.

VII There must be a course of study pointed out for our young preachers if they are to rise and become master workmen. If this is not done, many will leave us and go elsewhere; they should also be examined for several years in these studies.

Come brethren, do not let us think that if we are educated or if we educate ourselves that it will make us mad; no, most noble Festus. Remember that the Priests that originally officiated at the altar were profound scholars, and David was a Philosopher, Daniel an astronomer, Mark was finally a scribe, Luke a Physician, Paul a champion of the arts and sciences. . . . . Let us also remember that it is education and not true religion that enables the Pope of Rome and his priests to make so many proselytes to their system of errors, hence if we would make many proselytes for Jesus, let us not only be filled with the Holy Spirit, but let us store our minds with useful knowledge, so that we may be able to feed our flocks mentally as well as spiritually. . . . .<sup>1</sup>

While much of this letter is dedicated to the growing program of the Church with its need for parsonages, stationed ministers, benevolent offerings, etc., the heart of the letter concerns the growing need of an educated ministry on the part of the growing

1. Religious Telescope, January 1, 1845.

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Church. Master workmen were in demand, and the means of preparing them was pressing upon the heart of Jacob Ritter. He found able support from the hearts and minds of the most aggressive of his co-workers, particularly from Isaiah Potter, one of the Conference's greatest intellectual leaders; William Beighel, the outstanding young evangelist; and Jacob B. Ressler, the leading financier and college promotional worker.

Isaiah Potter felt there was a close association between the support and the education of a minister. Many of the problems over which he pondered 100 years ago are still as acute in this present day and age. In 1844, while the Conference was struggling against poverty of education and financial remuneration alike, he wrote to the **Religious Telescope** on "A few thoughts on the policy of Allegheny Conference." In this article he bewailed the fact that the large circuits were being divided, and that they were, as a result, unable to support their ministers. And then, he added, the poorest ministers, both financially and by leadership, were being sent to the poorest charges. This neither cared for the poorer ministers and their families, nor aided the weaker churches who needed the strongest of leadership. "If," he said, "the ministers are not good anywhere in the ministry, they should be sent about better business, and if they are good enough for a poor church, they should also be good enough to serve a rich church." The poor preacher on a circuit was getting about \$150, and out of that was forced to spend \$25 for rent and \$10 for traveling expenses.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846, Rev. Potter again called attention to the financial needs of the Allegheny Conference ministry in a masterful writing called, "An appeal to the church." He called upon the Church to support its ministry by paying them their disciplinary allowance. This allowance was at this time \$200 for married men

1. **Religious Telescope**, January 15, 1845.



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and \$100 for single men. He stated the following 3 main reasons for his stand.

The ministry should receive their disciplinary allowance.

1st. Because it is due them—they have earned it.

2nd. Because they need it. It is not more than will decently keep them.

3rd. Because if she, the Church, does not support them, she cannot expect them to labor for her.

It is a matter of fact well known to the Church that many of her best men, or her most mighty men, have been necessitated to either locate or leave her.<sup>1</sup>

But while Isaiah Potter felt that there was an injustice done the ministry through the payment of insufficient salaries, he also felt that the ministry held a high obligation to the Church. With this in mind, he wrote a rather lengthy article on the "Qualifications of the Ministry" from his appointment to the Bellefonte Circuit, and gave the following opinions.<sup>2</sup>

The qualifications of the ministry are of a threefold character.

1st. **Natural**, which includes sound judgement, wisdom, a quick mind, a retentive memory, a ready graceful delivery.....

2nd. **Gracious**. Grace must have changed his heart and made him a new creature.....

3rd. **Acquired**. He should understand the first rudiments of the English grammar. He should be trained in history and geography. No man should be admitted to the ministry until he at least understands the first principles of Theology.....

1. **Religious Telescope**, November 18, 1846.

2. **Ibid.**, May 3, 1845.



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Let us be more careful in licensing our men in the future that we may not be continually imposed upon. And I venture to say, although I am no prophet in the proper sense of the word, that in the course of ten years we will have a ministry that will rival any in these United States. Do not forever stand in your own light, brethren.

With the passing of two more years, he became so fully committed to the need for an institution of higher learning, that he wrote as follows:

- I. Institutions of learning are the only method by which men in general can obtain a sufficient amount of learning to preach the gospel in every nation.
- II. Institutions of learning are not the only method of learning or means by which men in general can obtain a sufficiency of learning to preach the gospel to the whole world, but they are to all men the shortest method.
- III. Institutions are the easiest method of obtaining learning.
- IV. Institutions of learning are the only means by which men in general can become qualified to assist in extending the Kingdom of Christ into foreign lands. . Will we do nothing for our brethren in darkness. <sup>1</sup>

He closed this masterful appeal with a demand for preparation for foreign missionaries such as other denominations were giving.

The growing sentiment for a denominational college was brought to a head by Jacob Ritter, who wrote an informal letter addressed to the Allegheny Conference. It read as follows:

To the Allegheny Conference:

Dear Brethren-What about an educational school?

1. Religious Telescope, May 1, 1847.

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It will be recalled that the last General Conference left it optional with the different Annual Conferences to raise funds and establish literary institutions or not.

Better than one year has passed and nothing has been done. It is admitted that the age, reason, and Bible of God call for action immediately. Behold the colored people, and almost every society has gone into this enterprise and will we set at ease in Zion.

What shall we do? . . . . Let us take up a subscription . . . . I am willing to be one out of ten to pay the just sum of \$100.00 in four annual payments of 25.00 dollars . . . . I believe that we can raise this year 5,000 dollars . . . . Yours for the power of the Holy Ghost, and an educational school.<sup>1</sup>

This open letter stimulated the thinking of the Conference to the extent that at the next Annual Conference meeting held in Mt. Pleasant during the week of February fourth, 1847, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved that this Conference take into consideration the propriety of erecting a literary institution (to be located where the Conference may direct) for the education of the rising generation . . . . The committee reported that the literary institution now in contemplation be located in Mt. Pleasant or Johnstown, which of the two places shall be determined by the greater amount of funds raised in each county where the said towns are located. Brother Ritter was appointed traveling agent for the present year, to solicit donations to be appropriated to the building of a literary institution of learning.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Op. Cit.*, July 5, 1846.

2. *Religious Telescope*, February 24, 1847.

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The matter of the general education of the ministry was also taken into consideration with the result that the following resolution was passed:

Inasmuch as we consider the literary standing of ministerial qualifications to be quite too low in the United Brethren in Christ Church:

Resolved therefore that we appoint a committee of three who shall define a regular course of study, which shall be a test of admission into the itinerancy in our Conference for applicants hereafter.

John Wallace, Isaiah Potter, and J. B. Ressler were appointed said committee.

Resolved that the following branches of English Literature be that test viz., a good theoretical and practical knowledge of English Grammar, a general knowledge of Geography, History, profane and ecclesiastical, both modern and ancient, and theology. As an assistant to the above studies we recommend Smith's E. Grammar, Olney's Geography, Rollin and Josephus on profane history, Mosheim and D. Aubignies Church History, Wesley's sermons and Watson's Dictionary on Theology.<sup>1</sup>

David Edwards, the editor of the **Religious Telescope**, was an attendant at this Conference and wrote: "Although there is room for improvement in Allegheny Conference, yet to their credit it must be said that their reports exhibited the most general interest in all the institutions of the Church, of those of any Conferences we have ever attended."

That Dr. Ritter immediately became active in the new field of service assigned to him is evidenced by

1. **Religious Telescope**, February 24, 1847.

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the report headed, "Allegheny Conference Seminary," that appeared three months later. It read as follows:

This seminary is not to be a priest factory but is designed for general education for male and female and for all that may patronize it and maintain good Morals; the same to be conducted with prayers; the right of which is based upon the doings of last General Conference.

(Then followed Dr. Ritter's report listing the various families that had given \$2,860.00 to the new institution and closing with the statement: 'in addition to the above, I have the promise of five hundred dollars from our good old German Mennonites and others in Westmoreland Co.')

The institution has been located at Mt. Pleasant according to the action at Conference. It is to be erected on J. Lipencott's beautiful hill, one mile and one fourth south of the town, where there is a beautiful spring of water. As this is quite central for all of our Eastern Conferences, I have been requested to solicit affectionately the cooperation of the Muskingum and Virginia Conferences, and also those brethren in Western Pennsylvania Conferences, that are favorable to the institution, with the assurance that we will give them a voice and an interest in the concern to the full amount of all they may put in. . . . One fourth of the subscription was paid down and the rest in three payments.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that the location of the new institution was given as being a mile and a quarter outside of the town of Mt. Pleasant. A few weeks later

1. Religious Telescope, May 5, 1847.



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Dr. Ritter wrote to correct this statement by saying that the institution was only one quarter of a mile outside the town.<sup>1</sup>

For those who would care to visit this famous landmark of education in Allegheny Conference, it would be easily located by going south on the Connellsville Road to the edge of Mt. Pleasant. There it will be observed, surrounded by homes that have been built about its spacious campus. It is to the right of the road as the traveler leaves Mt. Pleasant.

Bishop Russell, that great opponent of education in the days of the early United Brethren Church, took occasion to write through the medium of the **Religious Telescope** in opposition to the growing sentiment for education. It was a determined article standing out against all thoughts of higher education, and calling upon Dr. Ritter to "Cease his collections of funds until he has heard from the voice of the Church." He went on to say, with reference to Otterbein College: "The two agents for the Blendon School (Blendon Seminary was sold to the Ohio brethren and was renamed Otterbein College) will have to go on until the contract by that school is met, and then the trustees will have the goodness to let things rest until the subject is reconsidered." Bishop Russell also spoke scornfully of admitting a "Preacher Factory" into the Church, and called upon the German ministers and others to make strong efforts to solicit subscribers for the German paper, paid in advance, through which, he said, "You can hear and be heard on the subject."

Concerning the ministers who would enter such a school, he commented that they were merely preacher fabrics to be turned out of a preacher factory.

In response to this verbal flaying, Dr. Ritter wrote as follows:

1. **Religious Telescope**, May 26, 1847.

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Dear Father and Bishop:

With some degree of amusement, I have read your views on education, or seminaries of learning, but as all can see that they are visionary and premature, we will leave them with the public.

You are premature in railing out against a preacher fabric or factory in our beloved Church, seeing that none has ever been called for the like, neither are we willing to uphold such fabrics in our borders, and although the Allegheny Conference goes in for education, yet they have always and still will oppose unconverted and unordained preachers from entering our Conference, let their literary attainments be what they may. Neither have we maintained that the Church was wrong for not having them; we are strict disciplinarians. It is true, dear Father, you may ask, why then talk about raising the ministerial standard in the Church? Ans. Because we have seen that there is room for a growth in grace, piety, and knowledge, and as we would desire to be filled with all the fullness of the gospel, and thus occupy until the Lord comes.....

2nd. You ask, "But why do you want a Seminary"? Why to teach our sons and daughters and the children of others that would desire to learn under the prayers and influence of the Church, more than what is taught in our common and often wicked schools. In traveling around I have heard of upwards of two hundred children in Westmoreland County, Pa., that are determined on having a good education. Our people are able to give it to them and others would

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prefer sending to our institution. Now what shall we do? Shall we discourage and deny them the advantage of an education? Shall we send them to infidel or Catholic schools? I appeal to Father Russell in the spirit of meekness. 3rd. As regards a burden, our Conference has during the last year put up eight or nine good meeting houses, supported their preachers and missionary cause, the Telescope, gave a few thousand dollars to the suffering Irish, and are willing to give largely to our institution. . . . Lastly, we will not call upon Brothers Kumler and Erb, former Bishops. . . . and Brothers Glossbrenner and Hanby, present Bishops, warm advocates of a seminary. Oh no, I shall not call upon ten thousand tongues to rise up against our dear and beloved brethren who have taken a stand against the institution. Oh no, we will still love them and their conscientious views, and hope that they will let us have ours. But once more, if our German paper is to be a weapon of warfare to thrash down education and institutions of learning with, then we shall oppose its going into the east, and cannot patronize it, for we are for peace. Lord bless the Church and make us all wise as serpents and harmless as doves.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition was not limited, however, to Bishop Russell. While the ministry as a whole were in favor of the establishing of a seminary, there were some ministers, and many laymen who staunchly opposed the movement. William Beighel, who had at first been a firm supporter of the movement, began to have many doubts as to its ultimate success. As a result he wrote calling the attention of the members of Allegheny

1. Religious Telescope, May 12, 1847.

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Conference to the fact that while he had at first been in favor of the movement, he now felt called upon to oppose it. He said:

At first we were but little acquainted with what it cost to erect and fit out an institution, by acquainting ourselves we confess that our mind has undergone a change... The good Lord knows that we have trouble enough with our unpaid-for meeting houses..... It was stated that seven or eight thousand dollars could be easily raised in the Conference, and a motion was then made that the man who thought so should be appointed to raise it... And had we that much we would still have little enough.<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks later he also added: "To say that our Conference has not been swayed by bigotry, vanity, and enthusiasm for the past several years would be to betray an utter ignorance of real facts."<sup>2</sup>

Such was the opposition that Jacob Ritter faced within the bounds of his own Conference, coming in this instance from one who had at first supported him. But in spite of it all he continued to have faith in God and in his Conference that an educational institution might become a reality.

Throughout all these trying days, however, there were two loyal supporters, Isaiah Potter and J. B. Ressler. In answer to the accusation of William Beighel, Rev. Potter wrote the following:

....The one fact that you cannot deny is that you differ with the Conference, and I believe, with the Church, on some very important subjects. Yet this bigoted Church has always treated you like a brother, and

1. **Op. Cit.**, June 9, 1847.

2. **Religious Telescope**, June 27, 1849.



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a Christian and you cannot deny it. . . . There is no ground for a charge of bigotry except in this, that the Conference rarely follows the council of the article before referred to.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. J. B. Ressler and Rev. Isaiah Potter were commissioned by the Conference to approach the Pennsylvania and East Pennsylvania Conferences, in behalf of the institution. Here the opposition was so outstanding that "they met with a very heartless, nay worse, unChristian reception when visiting, all because of their avowed hostility to ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

Virginia Conference alone showed a willingness to cooperate, giving \$3,060 to the institution by 1852. J. B. Ressler was the field representative at this time.

But in spite of all this opposition, Dr. Ritter reported that "about five thousand dollars will be raised by Conference time."<sup>3</sup>

### Mt. Pleasant College

The Conference convened in Jefferson, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, on the thirteenth of February, 1848. Bishop Russell presided. Following the acceptance of the report of Dr. Ritter on the subject of the new seminary, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved that this Conference invest the officers of previous appointment, with power to proceed to build a good plain brick building as soon as there are \$1500 in materials and monies at their command.

Resolved that each member of this Conference use his influence **to the utmost** to collect for the seminary what is subscribed, and as much more as possible.

The office of agent was discontinued and

1. **Religious Telescope**, September 27, 1849.

2. **Ibid.**, January 21, 1848.

3. **Ibid.**, January 21, 1848.

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Dr. Ritter was returned to Johnstown by appointment.<sup>1</sup>

In 1852 the work had progressed to such an extent that the secretary of the Board of Trustees of the College reported:

That whereas the Conference in 1847 resolved to erect such a school, and had authorized the building committee to proceed in 1848, the committee contracted for such a building and had received it from the hands of the contractor in 1851. The cost of the building and appurtenances was \$6,117.18. There is yet to be paid at this date \$2,975.00, and there are subscriptions of \$1,173.00.

... The building is a good substantial one. There are four recitation rooms, two society rooms, and a chapel that will seat four hundred persons. J. B. Ressler was elected traveling agent.....<sup>2</sup>

An interesting account of the wholehearted support that the new institution did receive from one of the United Brethren families, is typical of the reception that the field representative received many times as he interviewed the loyal United Brethren families of the Conference. May it be said that the author of this description was probably about 14 years of age at the time, since the name of Mt. Pleasant College did not come into being until the year 1847, and I. L. Kephart was born on December 10, 1832. Allowing for the fact that J. B. Ressler was then the pastor of the home, the age of 14 would be acceptable. Doctor Kephart wrote the following:

My first knowledge of there being such a

1. **Religious Telescope**, March 15, 1848.

2. Fulton, James Spenser,. **History of the Allegheny Conference**, pp. 18-19.

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thing as a college came to me in my father's barn one day when he and I were thrashing seed wheat with the flail. I was then about 12 years of age. Rev. J. B. Ressler of Allegheny Conference came there and hitched his horse to the fence and climbed over the fence onto the barn floor. He introduced himself to father and commenced to talk in the interest of Mt. Pleasant College. Father leaned on the staff of his flail and listened to him. I remember well that he used the argument: other churches are establishing colleges in which to educate their children and if we do not do so our children will grow up and go off to these other schools and will of course join these other churches, and we cannot succeed as a church that way. Then he spoke to father something about giving something to help this college and father said: 'Well it is nearly dinnertime now. I will go and put your horse in the stable. Go into the house and we will have some dinner and talk the matter over with the mother.' Father always honored mother as one of his special counselors in all business affairs. We went to the house, ate dinner, and turned around from the table and they commenced to talk. Ressler explained to mother what he had explained to father, and as a result of their interview, they gave their note for \$25 to help the college. Just how soon it was paid, I do not know, but I know that they paid it, and that their giving that note raised quite a hub-bub in the neighborhood. The neighbors took it up and said father and mother were giving money to help establish a school to make people proud, and one of the school

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trustees walked two miles to see father and lecture him for what he had done. Father took it all good naturedly and did not say much. To make an impression the school trustee said: 'Why the neighbors are up in arms about it. They say that you are robbing and beggaring your children.' That made mother a bit cross and she turned around and said: 'Well I would just thank the neighbors if they would mind their own business. Papa and I gave that note and we will pay it and we will not ask them for anything to keep our children from being beggars.' That set me to thinking about a college and what a college was. I could read and write then a little.<sup>1</sup>

After much strenuous preparation on the part of the leaders of Allegheny Conference, the new college was finally completed, and the advertisements sent out of the grand opening. The first such notice that appeared in the pages of the Religious Telescope will be of special interest. It read as follows:

### Mt. Pleasant College

This school . . . will open its first session on the first Monday of November next.

The institution is designed to afford facilities to enable both sexes to obtain a liberal, thorough, and practical education.

The male and females will occupy separate departments in recitation, and strict attention will be paid to the manners, as well as the mental and moral discipline of all the pupils. There will also be a primary school connected with the institution.

1. Kephart, Cyrus J., and Funk, William R., **Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart**, p. 83.



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Terms of tuition per session of five months.  
Primary branches embracing Orthography, Etymology, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, Natural Philosophy, and English Grammar. \$5.00

Algebra, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, Rhetoric, History, Ancient and Modern, etc. \$8.00

Logic, Political Economy, Higher Branches of Mathematics, Latin and Greek Languages, etc. \$10.00

Price to be paid, one half in advance and the remainder before the close of the session. Boarding can be obtained in town and vicinity from \$1.25 to \$1.75 a week.

The Principal of this institution is William R. Griffith, A. M., former Principal of the Otterbein University of Ohio. Principal of the female department is Miss Elizabeth Miller.

I. Potter,

Pres. Board of Trustees<sup>1</sup>

In summing up the work for the first year, Principal Griffith reported that there were 40 students enrolled during the first semester, 15 of them from United Brethren homes, and 63 in attendance during the second semester, of which only 13 were from United Brethren homes, including 10 gentlemen and 3 ladies.<sup>2</sup>

While this was a splendid beginning for the young college, it was soon evident that the denomination was not yet ready to support more than one college. So it was that as early as 1855 a resolution is noted in the Conference minutes, stating that if the board of trustees of the college deemed it wise, the Conference was agreed to the removal of Mt. Pleasant College to be

1. **Religious Telescope**, September 18, 1850.

2. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1851.

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united with Otterbein College at Westerville, Ohio.

However, the trustees were not yet ready to give up, and they evolved a plan of selling \$100 scholarships, with the understanding that the purchaser could send a student to the school, free of tuition, at any time. The aim of the board was to sell 200 scholarships during the first 18 months and 200 more in the next several years. Thus a total of \$40,000 would serve as an endowment fund for the new college. This plan was not well supported, however, and the board of trustees continued to find themselves involved in financial difficulties.

In 1857 a third semester innovation was instituted in an attempt to strengthen the student body of the school. From the publicity given, it must have been the forerunner of the tri-semester system introduced in the field of higher education through our entrance into the Second World War in December, 1941. The following advertisement will prove interesting:

### Mt. Pleasant College

This institution is located at Mt. Pleasant, Westmoreland County, Pa.---A healthy, moral, retired place of some 1,200 inhabitants. It is entirely free from any temptation to youth in more public places. The College covers a most delightful eminence near the town, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. The attention of parents and guardians is invited to the claims of this institution.

The summer session will commence on the second Wednesday of April next, and continue for twenty weeks.

Expenses of the term.

College department ..... \$13.00

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Half Collegiate recitations . . . . .	10.00
Preparatory department . . . . .	9.00
Boarding per week, including room . .	2.00
Instrumental Music . . . . .	Extra.

Tuition must be paid invariably in advance. Students from the east or west can come to Greensburg by railroad, and thence by stage to Mt. Pleasant. They should be present at the beginning of the session. For other particulars see Catalogue which can be had by addressing the undersigned.

A. Owen.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all these efforts, however, it was felt by the Conference, and by the board of trustees of the College, that it would be best for the educational advancement of the Conference and the general Church for our efforts to be united with those of Otterbein College. As a result, the 1858 Annual Conference meeting in Mechanicsburg agreed to sanction the transfer of Mt. Pleasant College to Otterbein University, which had already been agreed upon by the board of trustees of the College.

Dr. A. W. Drury commented concerning the early beginnings of Mt. Pleasant College: "The movement at once took more of business character, and met with a larger financial response than characterized the beginnings of Otterbein College. . . . But it had no Dr. Lewis Davis who could live by devouring defeat." One wonders what would have been the ultimate fate of Mt. Pleasant College, had Dr. Jacob Ritter remained active in his leadership, rather than retiring to his medical

1. **Religious Telescope**, March 4, 1857.

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practice. Upon one great leader the success or failure of future progress often depends.

For some time after this Mt. Pleasant College carried on her work under the name of Westmoreland College, although her United Brethren students and resources were transferred to Otterbein College, then Otterbein University.

On January the fifth, 1869, the United Brethren interests in the College were sold to the Baptist Denomination for the sum of \$3,500 and the school became known as the **Western Pennsylvania Classical and Scientific Institute of Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania.**<sup>1</sup>

In June, 1913, it became evident that the academic department of the College could no longer exist, with the result that in September, 1913, the school opened as the **Mount Pleasant Institute Music School.** This school continued until the year 1931, when the school was officially closed.<sup>2</sup>

Since that time the buildings were again sold, for a small sum of money to the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and are being used for summer camp purposes.

When we realize the value that these buildings could have represented traditionally to Allegheny Conference, we are reminded of the parable of Jesus concerning the ten virgins. While negotiations were being carried on for the buildings, our entire Conference slept, and the historic buildings that meant so much to our early Church were lost to Allegheny Conference and to the Church.

### City Mission Work

We now turn from the developing consciousness toward the educating of our ministry and laity to another interesting phase of the growing and changing

1. Loar, Byron Melville, **A Memoir of Western Pennsylvania. . . Classical and Scientific Institute**, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.



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Church of the United Brethren in Christ. From its very beginnings the United Brethren Church had been essentially a rural Church. Cities were conscientiously avoided as having an evil influence upon churchmen. On some occasions good city locations were given up when a town was built around a church, and the church moved to a more secluded location, thus losing its greatest opportunity of service.

President William R. Griffith, of Mt. Pleasant College, commented on this fact on one occasion when he said: "Hitherto the United Brethren Church has manifested too much tendency to avoid the cities; but I see no good reason why we should not direct a part of our efforts to these places."<sup>1</sup>

As late as 1887 an anonymous churchman from Westmoreland County, who wrote under the signature of "R," was insisting that we turn more to the cities for our program of expansion. He mentioned the opportunities that were afforded by the growing towns that were locating along the Pennsylvania Railroad lines between Altoona and Pittsburgh. Commenting on the tendency of the United Brethren Church to avoid cities, and wealthy homes, he wrote as follows:

Somehow some of our people have got the idea that rich people have no souls. We need to save the poor and to preach to them. But why not preach to, and save the rich. The same gospel without change suits both classes. The United Brethren Church has a good many wealthy members but we need more. We can build more and better churches, we can pay more missionary money—in fact we can do more of everything we are now doing.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, December 31, 1851.

2. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1887.

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As early as the third Conference session held in 1841, a mission church organization was established. This was the Susquehanna Mission. In 1842 the Milheim Mission was added, and in 1843 the Somerset Mission came into being. Of these three, the Somerset Mission alone had even the remotest suggestion of a city mission, and in 1845 it was added to the Ligonier Circuit and renamed the Somerset Circuit.

The first actual city mission church was the Johnstown First Church. The 1846 Conference minutes record that Johnstown was made a mission appointment with an appropriation of \$100. Jacob Ritter was the first pastor of the Church. His enthusiasm and dynamic power were immediately evidenced by the report that he sent to the **Religious Telescope**, stating the following:

### **Dedication at Johnstown**

Our meeting house at Johnstown was dedicated at the service of God on the 8th of October, 1846. . . . . The house is finished in beautiful though modest style with the name in front. I know of none in our entire church, and there are but few anywhere that excel it. The lot cost us one hundred dollars, and the house five hundred dollars. The stoves, lamps, tables, chairs, carpets, etc. cost us \$690.00. Five hundred and seventy five dollars has been secured, and the balance is not to be paid for one year. (meaning that the balance is to be paid within one year)

At our dedication the Lord was with us. One joined. Since Conference I have taken up two appointments five miles from town at Mr. Bell's Furnaces. . . . . Mr. Bell agrees to pay us fifty dollars annually. . . . . Now my dear brethren permit me to say that if judg-

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ment is used, this is destined to make one of the richest and best stations in the whole church. . . . Brethren and sisters, think of us as you bow before the throne of grace.<sup>1</sup>

In February, 1848, he wrote again:

Brother Edwards: (Editor of the **Religious Telescope** at this time)

Our beautiful and well finished house is well nigh paid for, and in a few months we shall be free from debt. Much has been done in less than two years. . . . The opposition that we met from a few selfish men in this Conference and from old established churches, free masons, odd fellows, and sons of temperance, etc., I will not mention. . . . But O when will our brethren send missionaries to other interesting towns to which we have been long invited.<sup>2</sup>

This splendid success of city mission work in the city of Johnstown gave the Conference courage, and in 1850 it was decided to send Rev. J. L. Holmes to establish a Pittsburgh City Mission. The future of such a mission seemed very bright, but unfortunately there appeared a tendency on the part of the pastoral leadership to lean upon the Conference for support, rather than count upon the community for its own support. While very sincere in his efforts for the progress of the church, Rev. Holmes lacked the aggressiveness and the determination of Dr. Ritter, as is evidenced by the following summarized account to his brethren through the medium of the **Religious Telescope**.

Rev. Holmes went to the Allegheny City section of Pittsburgh, and found that the field of service was

1. **Religious Telescope**, November 25, 1846.

2. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1848.



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opportune, but that no house of worship was available. The cheapest hall that could be rented would cost three dollars a service, or one hundred and fifty six dollars a year, and then would only be available on Sundays. However, a central lot could be secured on a perpetual lease of twenty dollars a year, and on it a church could be built for about six hundred dollars. Three hundred dollars of this amount could be raised in Pittsburgh, but the remainder would have to come out of the pockets of Allegheny Conference. A closing appeal was then made that each of the pastors of Allegheny Conference cooperate that they might have a church in the Pittsburgh District.<sup>1</sup>

Six months later Rev. Holmes made another desperate appeal to the Conference for aid in the mission work at Pittsburgh. He mentioned that the church had been built on faith at a cost of \$950, \$450 to be paid when under roof and \$250 at the end of 3 months, and the balance in 6 months. But thus far only 2 preachers had cooperated with the pastor, namely Rev. George Wagner and Rev. John Wallace. He closed his appeal by reminding the brethren that he had not been forced to move to Pittsburgh, having already been stationed on a good appointment, but that at the request of the brethren and of the Bishop, he had gone. "Now," he said in closing, "Will the brethren please work for this mission in the Pittsburgh District."<sup>2</sup>

In November, 1851, Rev. Holmes sent a report on the work of the Mission to the office of the **Religious Telescope**, and stated that he had added 27 new members, making a total of 80. However, they were \$160 in debt, and were afraid of the sheriff. Furthermore, only 8 of the 21 ministers assigned to work in the Conference had sent any aid to this worthy mission. The following report was included:

1. **Religious Telescope**, March 20, 1850.
2. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1850.



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Preacher's salary .....	\$56.00
Presiding Elder's Fee .....	15.00
For Books .....	20.00
S. S. Library .....	32.00
Papering and Painting Church .....	20.00
Venetian Blinds .....	27.00
On Church Debt .....	75.00
For sexton, oil and fuel .....	40.00
For support of Poor Members .....	10.70
	\$229.70

"You may think that some of the above is unnecessary expense," wrote Rev. Holmes, "but I hope that some of you will live to see the day to learn by experience what it costs to keep up a church in the city."<sup>1</sup>

For five more years the Allegheny City Mission Church struggled on with but little success. Finally it was decided to vacate this property and relocate. A property was purchased near the corner of Penn and Grant Streets for \$2500, where a church building was already on the lot. The mission was then renamed the Pittsburgh Mission by the 1857 Conference.

Rev. George Waggoner, Jr., was appointed by the 1858 Conference to serve the Mission Station and collect funds for it. Westmoreland County and Pittsburgh families gave \$1600. Among these gifts was a present of \$70 from a Mr. Jenkins, the President of the Iron City College. This caused Rev. Waggoner to write to the **Religious Telescope** saying, "I would here state that it would be of advantage to any of our ministers who wish to give their sons an education fitting them for business such as bookkeepers, clerks, etc., to send them to this institution as they will receive half rates.. or twenty dollars for a minister's son."

1. **Religious Telescope**, October 8, 1851.

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Rev. J. L. Baker secured portraits of Philip William Otterbein, sized 14 by 18 inches, and sold them for \$1 a piece, the profit to go toward the Pittsburgh Mission.

But in spite of all these efforts the Mission seemed to be doomed to failure. In 1862, with the Civil War in progress, there was a shortage of ministers and a retrenchment program naturally resulted. Dr. H. A. Thompson, who had been the pastor of the Mission the preceding year, was sent as a professor to Otterbein University, and the Mission Church was added to the Allegheny Circuit.

A few years later the field was abandoned. Rev. D. Speck mentioned through the medium of the **Religious Telescope** that it had been given up because of the lack of a few hundred dollars.

The 1873 minutes record that emphasis was once more to be placed on the Pittsburgh mission work, but stated that the Wilkesburg Church was to have the first consideration. Thus the ill-fated venture into downtown Pittsburgh had failed.

In the year following the opening of the Allegheny City Mission, namely in 1851, the Altoona City Mission opened. Here the work prospered immediately just as it had in Johnstown. Today both of these cities are well churched with United Brethren organizations, 9 churches being located in Altoona, and 6 in Johnstown.

Let us return now to a consideration of the progressive growth of the Conference.

### Early Conference Problems

At the Shellsburg Conference, held beginning February 20, 1845, a resolution<sup>1</sup> required that the stationing committee assess a definite amount on each circuit and station for the use of the Presiding Elders,

1. **Religious Telescope**, March 26, 1845.

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the said amounts to be collected by them from the circuits and stations, and receive a proportional part of those amounts at their quarterly meetings.

This meant that one-fourth of the Presiding Elder's salary was to be raised at each Quarterly Conference that he held.

Another interesting resolution of this Conference<sup>1</sup> stated:

Resolved, that it be the duty of each Presiding Elder to take a list of the subscribers to the benevolent fund on his district, and require the circuit preachers to collect all the interest that is due and pay the same over to the Presiding Elder, and he report to the treasurer at Hagerstown.<sup>1</sup>

The year following, the Conference was held at Mt. Pleasant with Bishop Handby presiding. At this Conference the society known as the "Sons of Temperance," and the order called "Odd Fellows" were both considered to be "contrary to our Discipline and be it further stated that no one can continue in our Church who belongs to them."<sup>2</sup>

This Conference was the first to take note of the prevalent use of tobacco. The following motion was recorded: "Resolved that all persons dispense with the use of tobacco who may attend during the sitting of the Conference."<sup>3</sup> In 1848, the Conference record reveals the following: "On motion of J. B. Ressler the members shall dispense with the use of tobacco during this Conference session, or provide themselves with a spit-box."<sup>4</sup> The 1856 Conference record states: "Resolved that the use of tobacco be dispensed with

1. **Religious Telescope**, March 26, 1845.

2. **Ibid.**, February 24, 1847.

3. **Ibid.**,

4. **Ibid.**, March 15, 1848.



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during our sessions of Conference, especially on the ladies' side of the house."<sup>1</sup>

Other events of this period included a brief notification in the **Religious Telescope** stating by inference that a part time Sunday School had been held in the Donegal Meeting House on the Washington Circuit in 1847. While this particular appointment has long since been closed, it may well lay claim to being one of the first Sunday Schools in the Conference. This meeting house was in Washington County. The quotation is as follows: "Let us show our faith by our works, and if permitted to see the opening of the Sabbath School in the spring, let us renew our efforts with more zeal and push forward this noble institution."<sup>2</sup>

Another Washington County appointment, long since forgotten, was prospering at this time as was evidenced by the announcement that: "A new brick church thirty by forty feet had been erected on the Vance's Appointment on Washington Circuit, and would be dedicated on the first of December next. Pray for us, J. Holmes."<sup>3</sup>

Another building program was evidenced by the announcement signed by Samuel S. Snyder, reading as follows: "On the first Sabbath of November, the Sewickley Church at Tunks (Funks, now known as Old Sewickley on the Wyano Charge) was dedicated to God. The weather was unfavorable and prevented the people from turning out, notwithstanding God was with His people to revive and bless."<sup>4</sup>

The 1849 Conference held in Johnstown passed the following important resolution, showing a rapidly developing change in opinion concerning the temperance question: "Resolved that the delegates to Gener-

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes of 1856, p. 3.

2. **Religious Telescope**, May 10, 1848.

3. *Ibid.*, June 28, 1848.

4. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1849.



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al Conference use their influence to insert a clause into the Discipline prohibiting entirely the use of ardent spirits as a beverage throughout our Church.”<sup>1</sup> This resolution was carried to General Conference and passed unanimously.

Entrance was made into the field of foreign missions with the drawing up of a Constitution in the year 1853. To mention the work of this organization and its development into various Conference and denominational agencies would require a small volume in itself. One of its most favored children is the Conference Church Extension and Missionary Society whose work is well known to all members of the Allegheny Conference.

To follow the growth and development of the individual churches of this period would be impossible for two reasons. First, because one volume could not contain the immense amount of materials that would be involved, and second, because of the vagueness and incompleteness of many of our Church records.

### Herminie Church

To illustrate, let us consider the case of the Herminie Church of the United Brethren in Christ where the writer is now pastor. Community tradition placed the organization of the church somewhere in the proximity of the year 1861. This date was given in a brief church history account that appeared in the History of Allegheny Conference by Dr. J. S. Fulton.

The first mention of the Mars Hill Church, forerunner of the Herminie Church, noticed in the **Religious Telescope**, occurs in the issue of December the tenth, 1866, where there is an account of a revival service that converted 40 souls, and resulted in 36 accessions to the church. This seemed to verify the earlier

1. **Religious Telescope**, January 31, 1849.

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statement that the church was organized about the time of the opening of the Civil War.

However, in reviewing the Annual Conference minutes of 1854, the following positive statement regarding the existence of the Mars Hill Church was found: "Westmoreland Circuit to be divided thus: Madison, Mars Hill, Funks, Osceola, to connect with Wilksburg, Braddocks Field, and to take up McKeesport." This would definitely place the Mars Hill appointment as being in existence in 1853.

Finally, in reviewing an account of the life of Henry Shoemaker in the 1904 minutes of Allegheny Conference, the author came upon the statement that "Henry Shoemaker was converted in the Marsh Chapel now the Herminie Class." This conversion was to have taken place in about the year 1842, which would reasonably set the date of the origin of the Herminie Church to at least 1843, if the Church indicated was the Mars Hill Church. There has never been a Marsh Chapel known in the Herminie vicinity, or in Allegheny Conference to the best of knowledge. However, if the article were presented in manuscript to the printer, as it probably was, it is easily conceivable that the church name was written as Mars h Chapel, and then appeared in print as Marsh Chapel, rather than as Mars Hill Chapel.

In the Westmoreland County Deed Book 71, page 118, there is the following record: "John Tilbrook to Trustees of Mars Hill Meeting House in Sewickley Twp. 80 perches of land **being part of** land of which Frederick Medsgar of said Twp. died seized in fee: Orphan's Court, 1833."<sup>1</sup>

This deed was at first thought to refer only to the Baptist organization that shared the meeting house in the early days of the Mars Hill Church. However, the

1. Milligan, Ella Metsker, *Christian Metzger*, p. 159.

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fact that we know Mars Hill United Brethren Church to have had an organization in 1843, leads us to believe that we must have shared the building from the beginning. This would place the Church organization back at least to the year of the church building, or approximately the year 1841. This same farm was owned in the year 1814 by Christian Berger, thus making the location of the Mars Hill Church, or the Herminie Church of today, to be on the original farm of one of the earliest of our traveling United Brethren preachers.

This brief picture of the background of the Herminie Church of the United Brethren in Christ, gives some idea of the difficulties involved in tracing the history of the average church of this period.

As to what the church buildings were like during this period, an interesting description of the Barren Run Church, located in Westmoreland County, gives a typical picture, as follows:

The dimensions of this church were about thirty by forty feet, with the gables facing the cemetery and school house (N. and S.) It had two doors, the main entrance was in the end facing the cemetery. This was considered the men's door, while another door, reached by a high flight of stone steps, was in the side next to the public road. This was termed the women's door. The seats were arranged in four blocks, the aisles forming a cross with the pulpit at the head and the door next to the cemetery at the base. The pulpit, like all others of its time, was a high enclosure. The entrance, which was carefully guarded with a door, was reached by a flight of steps. When a minister was within, nothing but the upper part of his body was visible, and even this was hidden during prayer. Like the pul-



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pits of the early New England Churches, it "Typified the awful distance and elevation of the sacred office." The doors and pulpit were painted white. All the other parts were unpainted.<sup>1</sup>

During this early period the names of the church organizations were not carried in the official records. Instead only the names of the charges appeared. However, from time to time there appeared in the Conference minutes a list of changes in the boundaries of the various charges. The changes made during the Conference of 1857 were very numerous and give a picture of some of the church organizations that composed the Conference at this time, as follows:

### West District

- 1st. That Greensburg, Randolph, and Pershing's Appointments be connected with Mt. Pleasant Appt. and be called the Mt. Pleasant Station.
- 2nd. That Fretz appointment be connected with Westmoreland Cir. and that Latrobe be taken up as an appointment.
- 3rd. That Walnut Hill and Detwiler Appts. be connected with the Springfield Cir. and that the Somerset Appt. be detached and supplied by the P. E.
- 4th. Allegheny City Mission be called Pittsburg Mission.

### East District

- 1st. That Altoona, Springfield, and Loop Appts. be formed into a station called Altoona Station.

1. Milligan, Ella Metsker, **Op. cit.**, p. 465.



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2nd. That Tyrone, Bells Mills, Antis, Fostoria, and Grazier's Appts. be connected with Warriors Mark Mission and be called Tyrone Circuit.

3rd. Curwinsville Mission remain as before.

4th. The Hollard Appts. be connected with the Shanka Bells school house, Cochran and Canoe Creek Appts. of the Mahoning Cir. and be called Luthersburg Mission.<sup>1</sup>

A copy of the first statistical report of the Conference that appeared in the Religious Telescope in the February fifth, 1851 issue, is reprinted on the final page of this chapter.

With this picture of Allegheny Conference as an established organization empowered with a vision of better things, we close our consideration of the period of organization and early growth. A new foe was appearing on the horizon, namely, political disunion, that was to be felt within the Conference. Slavery became an issue and the Church was not slow to take her stand.

1. Religious Telescope, January 28, 1857.

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Circuits and Missions	Preachers.	Appointments	Members Found	Members Received.	Whole Number	Preachers' Salaries	Missionary Money	Bishop's Money	Presiding Elder's Salary	Present's	Female Subscriptions.	Male Subscriptions.
Blair Circuit	S.S. Snyder	8	123	60	183	174.48	15.25	3.	39.00	10.	25	25
Jefferson Cir.	J.R. Sitman	11	( )	60	154.30	22.50	4.	45.67	45.67		22	22
Somersset.	Wm.B. Dick	11	107	56	105.75	10.00	2.	13.24	13.24		12	12
Westmoreland.	A.Harnden & J.L.Baker	10	192	51	300.	27.93	6.42	26.35	21.95		32	32
Liverpool.	R.G.Rankin	12	170	14	119.81	20.00	4.	19.00	19.00		22	22
Mt. Pleasant St.	I.Potter	4	110	63	207.80	20.80	3.13	21.37	21.37		29	29
Bellefonte Cir.	H.Lovell & D.Speck	18	195	74	189.13	10.86	4.70	36.00	6.00		12	12
Pittsburg Miss.	J.L.Holmes	5	( )	85	105.	3.00		4.71	13.50		20	1
Juniata Cir.	Wm. Stevenson & I.Potts	15	190	30	229.46	14.00	5.00	40.00	45.00		38	2
Clearfield Cir.	W.H.S.Keys	20	180	187	100.	10.00	4.	50.00	80.00		32	2
Allegheny Cir.	John Wallace	6	86	48	62.90	6.25	2.	12.55	12.55		15	1
Ligonier Cir.	G.Wagner	6	86	48	100.	21.00	4.22	36.00	11.00		15	1
Washington Cir.	S.Medzger	7	( )		130.	8.58		20.50	20.50			
Mahoning Miss.	Wm. Shepherd	12	148	40	100.	9.88	3.00	25.00	25.00		21	
Shellsburg Cir.	C.F.Bowers	12	148	40	140.	140.	9.88	4.56	35.00			

## CHAPTER V

### PERIOD OF EXPANSION AND CHANGE: 1860 - 1889

#### .. Influence of the Slavery Issue

The issue of slavery never very vitally affected the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The primary reason for this fact was the very positive statement that was proclaimed at the General Conference of 1821. It read as follows:

Resolved and enacted, that no slavery, in whatever form it may exist, and in no sense of the word, shall be permitted or tolerated in our Church; and should there be found any persons holding slaves who are members among us, or make application to become such, then the former cannot remain, and the latter cannot become members of the United Brethren in Christ unless they manumit their slaves as soon as they receive directions from the Annual Conference so to do. Neither shall any member of our Church have the right to sell any of the slaves which he or she may now hold. It shall be in the power of the Annual Conference to prescribe to such slaveholders whether, and how long, they may hire out their slaves; but no conference shall be allowed to give such slaveholders permission to hold or hire out their slaves for any longer time than until the master shall through the labor of such servants, have remuneration for the expenses of raising or buying them<sup>1</sup>.

This very strong resolution limited the expansion of the Church southward, but at the same time gave it

1. Drury, A. W., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 337.

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a unity that few churches possessed at the time of the Civil War.

At the first Allegheny Annual Conference session held in 1839, there was a resolution passed with reference to slavery. It read as follows:

Resolved-That we do not deem it expedient to lecture on the abolition question at our circuit appointments. Notwithstanding we believe that it is proper to reprove the sin of slavery as well as other evils. But if any brother shall feel it is his duty to lecture on the said subject, he shall have the privilege to make an appointment for that purpose, provided, that he does not thereby neglect his regular preaching places. <sup>1</sup>

In 1855 another resolution was passed by the Allegheny Annual Conference stating:

Resolved, That we look with deep regret to the encroachments of slavery upon our free territory and that we cannot express our indignation in terms sufficiently strong against the mercenary traitors of the North who aided in the passage of that villianous Nebraska Swindle. <sup>2</sup>

In 1857, following several references to the political excitement that was raging throughout the nation, and finding its way into some local congregations, the Conference passed these resolutions:

Resolved, That we regard American Slavery as a political curse to the nation, an outrage against humanity, and a grievous sin against God.

Resolved, That we regard it the duty of all our ministers to use all their influence both in

1. **Religious Telescope**, May 15, 1839.

2. **Religious Telescope**, January 31, 1855.



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public and in private to suppress the sum of all villanies, **American Slavery.**

Resolved, That this Conference regards the charge that ministers prostitute the pulpit to politics because they dare to preach against slavery, intemperance, etc. as the result of unpardonable ignorance or bigotry. <sup>1</sup>

When the 1862 Conference convened in Liverpool, the Civil War was well under way. The action of the Conference in support of the government of the United States of America was immediate. The minutes record it as follows:

### **Moral reform and Loyalty to the U. S. Government**

Whereas human bondage has in every age of the world tended to destroy the nations in which it existed, and whereas American slavery founded upon the same despotic rule has originated the present stupendous and unholy rebellion, which now not only threatens the existence of our Glorious Union, but the very being of our constitutional liberty, therefore.

Resolved that we as a Conference not only most heartily approve the action of the Government in quelling this rebellion but also solemnly pledge ourselves to aid it in our prayers and in every other honorable way to bring it together with its cause to a speedy and happy conclusion. <sup>2</sup>

Each Conference session following, for the duration of the rebellion, carried a strong resolution or group of resolutions for the prosecution of the War

1. Religious Telescope, January 28, 1857.

2. Allegheny Conference Proceedings of 1862, p. 12.

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“until rebellion is suppressed and swept to its native hell, and happy peace is brought to the homes and hearts of all our people.”<sup>1</sup>

With the conclusion of the War committed to history, the 1866 Conference met and formulated the following resolutions:

State of Country. Whereas God in His kind providence has since our last sitting put an end to the great Southern Rebellion and restored to us as a nation the inestimable blessings of peace thereby rescuing four million of the human race from that monster ‘The sum of all villainies AMERICAN SLAVERY’ and teaching us the great everliving principle that no wrong can be long successful and that Right and Truth will at last triumph, resolved therefore.

1. That we most gratefully acknowledge the hand of our Heavenly Father in the success of our arms, and the consequent restoration of peace.

2. That in the President’s veto (President Johnson who opposed the generous methods of President Lincoln when he succeeded him in office) and subsequent speeches we perceive the indications of a policy much to be deplored and that for the sake of our country’s honor and prosperity we deeply regret those aborations from the path of duty toward the freeman on the part of our Chief Executive.

3. That we have the fullest confidence in the justice of our cause, in the integrity of the U. S. Congress steadily and unflinchingly to pursue the path of Right and Duty in the

1. Allegheny Conference Proceedings, 1864, p. 6.

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adjustment of the great questions before it, and that while we deplore the recent course of the President, we still think and trust in the guidance of an overruling providence.

4. That we still conceive it to be our duty to pray for those in authority that God may direct them in the work of reconstructing this Government. <sup>1</sup>

Thus throughout the War the Conference stood solidly behind its Government. The Church suffered heavily throughout the conflict. In 1861 at the Conference preceding the Civil War there were 4968 members in Allegheny Conference. When the Conference of 1866 convened at the close of the War only 4291 members were listed. It would appear from the study of church records that in time of war the poor Christians, spiritually, become poorer Christians, and the more consecrated Christians become even more faithful. In 1917, there was a sharp decline in both church attendance and in church membership. Nineteen hundred and forty-two has likewise shown a loss in both attendance and membership.

While the Conference was solidly behind the Government of the United States in the War of the Rebellion, it also had its Southern sympathizers within the ranks of her ministry. At the 1865 Conference, the committee on Moral Character brought the following report: "That in the case of N. K. Shimp charged with uttering disloyal sentiments in reference to the Government and also proslavery views, that both of these charges were sustained and therefore resolved by this Conference that his name be erased from the Conference minutes and his license demanded." <sup>2</sup>

1. Allegheny Conference Proceedings, 1866, p. 6.

2. Allegheny Conference Proceedings, 1865, p. 15.

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The report in further detail stated that a Mr. Wesley had testified that N. K. Shimp had said in his presence that "Slavery as a divine institution always existed and always would."<sup>1</sup> Brother Sheerer had stated that Brother Shimp had made the statement in 1863 in the city of Altoona that "This was nothing but a black abolition war and forced upon us by the present administration."<sup>2</sup> Another brother by the name of Redpath had testified that Shimp had made the statement in his (Redpath's) home that "Slavery is a Divine Institution. It was taught in the Bible." "Then," said Redpath, "he defended slavery beginning in Deuteronomy and continuing down through the Scriptures."<sup>3</sup>

The N. K. Shimp of this action must not be confused with the W. K. Shimp who continued for many years in Conference service. The first named individual was Nathan, the second was named William.

### Civil War Period

While L. W. Stahl was able to write in an abbreviated Conference history, that appeared in the 1913 Conference Minutes, that 15 of our ministers had participated in the Civil War,<sup>4</sup> it must be said that only 3 of this number were listed as members of the Conference during the time of the conflict. All the others had united with the Conference as preachers at some time following the close of the War.

### D. R. Ellis

Chief among those who united with the ministry following the close of the War, from the standpoint of public interest, was D. R. Ellis, who served as an engineer's yeoman on the Monitor, and was in that immortal conflict between the Monitor and the Merrimac.

1. Allegheny Conference Proceedings, 1865, p. 15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 16.

4. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1913, p. 80.



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He was born in Wales on the twelfth of November, 1840, and came to America at the age of 19. At the age of 22 he enlisted on the Monitor. He was licensed to preach in 1876, and gave many years of faithful service to the Church.<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. G. Fulton, who knew him personally, described him as being short, heavy, set, and adorned with a heavy crop of red whiskers. An interesting account occurs in the pages of the **Religious Telescope** concerning an accident that took place while he was moving from Washington County to Lycippus. It reveals that:

Rev. D. Ellis met with what might have proved a serious accident while moving his goods from Washington County, Penna., to his allotted field of labor. There was a wreck on the railroad by which he sustained a number of bruises and his horse was rendered a cripple for life. Bro. Ellis told the Rail Road Company what they should do, and they did it, namely, paid him damages.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 3 ministers who were active in the ministry at the time of the opening of the Civil War, William B. Dick was the only one whose work was not traceable through the pages of the **Religious Telescope**. The other 2 men left a lasting record of their work through their letters to the Church paper.

### Dr. I. L. Kephart

While their letters were long and numerous, a few quotations will give a picture of their work in the army, and of their own evaluation of the work that they were doing as a part of the Northern Forces in preserving the Union. Dr. I. L. Kephart, brother of Ezekiel Boring, and Cyrus J., who later became Bishops in the

1. **Allegheny Conference Minutes**, 1908, p. 68.

2. **Religious Telescope**, December 22, 1886.

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Church, was a Chaplain with the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry. Later he became the Editor of the **Religious Telescope**. On one occasion he wrote from near Petersburg, Virginia.

Since the war commenced it would seem that our people and our armies have looked no higher than men for success. Lincoln, Scott, McClellan, Burnside, Hooker, Pope, Mead, and now Grant are the source to which they have looked and are still looking for victory, **and they look no higher**. Now it is right that we should have confidence in our leaders, but we should also remember that men are only instruments in God's hands for the accomplishing of His purposes. My faith is that God has a great and glorious future in reservation for our country, but it lays on the other side of this red sea of blood, through which we are now passing.<sup>1</sup>

A few months later he wrote in a much lighter vein, this time from Fort Stevenson, Virginia:

.... During the whole of the raid my health was excellent, and in spite of all our hardships and exposures we have some very amusing, pleasant times. Many jokes were cracked by both the officers and men; all seeming to enjoy themselves remarkably well. The pack train was christened 'The 2nd Bull Run Corps,' and it was generally understood that the Chaplain had command of the corps, which was the cause of many a humorous joke and many a hearty laugh. But Oh the turkeys, chickens, geese, ducks, sheep, pigs, hogs, calves, cattle, sweet potatoes, cabbage, and sorghum! Didn't we make them fly! and

1. **Religious Telescope**, August 3, 1864.

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didn't we live. Of course the Chaplain came in for his share, and a good share it was. Some may think it strange that he should favor foraging; but he is not one of those whose tender consciences (or tender sympathies for the rebels) makes them think it wrong to live off the rebels. On the other hand he thinks it right, and in accordance with the discharge of our duty to the Government to take from the enemy everything that is of use to us, as well as everything that can be used against us, and if he had it in his power he would subside the entire Union army upon the production of the rebels.

But I must close for this time. I am well and the good Lord is with me. Thanks be to His Holy name. The day dawns, Courage, friends of liberty, Courage.<sup>1</sup>

### Rev. A. J. Hartsock

Rev. A. J. Hartsock, who was pastor of the Johnstown First Church, enlisted as a Chaplain, and served two enlistments. He continued for some years in the service of the Conference and finally received an honorable discharge from the services of Allegheny Conference.

His first service was with the 133rd Regular Volunteers. "Feeling it my duty to serve my country, I cheerfully joined the army," was his own comment. His first letter came from Warrenton, Virginia. He concluded by saying:

We have now but a few sick--the health of our regiment is good. Five of our number died during the past month. Among the sick in our hospitals, the word is cheerfully received.

How earnestly they listen! My heart was

1. Religious Telescope, December 28, 1864.

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made glad one morning in our hospital. As I entered one poor fellow raised up and reached me his hand. His mouth was filled with praises to God. 'Last night,' he said, 'I found Jesus precious to my soul. Oh how I love Him.' A good work can, under the blessing of God, be done here. I trust that all Christians will pray for us. Pray that God may revive his work here and save many precious souls.

It requires moral courage to be a soldier of the cross. . . . Yet we want to endure hardness as good soldiers of the cross. To fight the good fight, to war a good warfare. Under our leader, Christ the Conqueror, we expect to gain the victory and wear the crown of Glory. <sup>1</sup>

Rev. Hartsock completed his first enlistment and returned to his pastorate at the Johnstown First Church. A few months later he was in Harrisburg where he reviewed the 110th Pennsylvania V. V. on parade. This regiment had lost four-fifths of its original number, and was having these large gaps in their membership filled. Apparently the Chaplain was also lost, for Rev. A. J. Hartsock soon afterward became the Chaplain of this organization, and was back to the War. Heavy loss again assailed the regiment, especially due to malaria fever. While recuperating from the effects of a heavy attack of fever, Rev. Hartsock wrote commending the work of the sanitary commission. Soon afterward he returned to his pastorate at the Johnstown First Church.

### Rev. W. B. Dick

We are indebted to the memory of Dr. Lawrence Keister for a record of the third minister of the group,

1. **Religious Telescope**, December 3, 1862.



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Rev. W. B. Dick. Dr. Keister remembers him as an organizer of a troop of cavalry over which he assumed command. Dr. Keister recalled that while he was a young boy in Mt. Pleasant, he had viewed the newly organized company of Rev. Dick which then paraded through the main street of the town.

### Rev. Samuel S. Snyder

One of the outstanding national figures in the slavery issue was Rev. Samuel S. Snyder. We know very little of his early life. The 1844 Allegheny Conference minutes first record his name as a pastor assigned to the Jefferson Circuit.<sup>1</sup> In 1851 he was elected to the office of Presiding Elder of the Eastern District. In 1853 he was transferred to the leadership of the Western District. Thus he traveled the entire Allegheny Conference as its spiritual leader. In 1855 the Conference minutes record that "Brother S. S. Snyder received a transfer to the Missouri Conference."<sup>2</sup> When the transfer was granted, Rev. Snyder was already hard at work in northern Kansas. He had reached his appointment in October, 1854, and located near Lawrence, Kansas.<sup>3</sup> The third session of Missouri Conference was held in his home, and of it Bishop Edwards wrote: "This is a small mission conference composed of our three missionaries in Kansas and four in southwestern Missouri."<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Snyder was a fearless opponent of slavery, and entered wholeheartedly into the fight to keep Kansas free from the introduction of slavery into her territory. When the General Conference of 1857 made Kansas Mission a Mission Conference, Rev. Snyder be-

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1844, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*, 1855, p. 2.

3. Drury, A. W., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 758.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 759.

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came its Presiding Elder, and traveled the territory preaching at every opportunity, and writing various newspaper articles against the issue of slavery. His life was threatened almost daily as the slavery problem became more and more grave. Finally, the climatic moment came during the tense days of the Civil War, when in 1863 the town of Lawrence, Kansas, was sacked. A young school teacher from Kentucky, named Quantrill, raided the little town on the twenty-fifth of August, 1863 and destroyed its buildings, killing from 140 to 150 of its inhabitants. Among the first to fall was Rev. S. S. Snyder who was shot down ruthlessly in his own barnyard by two of Quantrill's raiders. <sup>1</sup>

The memory of Rev. S. S. Snyder will live long in our Church history because of his courageous and devout character. The people of Lawrence, Kansas, never forgot his bravery and his conviction for right. When the denominational church building was destroyed by fire in 1936 and a new building begun, the name of the new Lawrence Church of the United Brethren in Christ was decided upon as the "S. S. Snyder Memorial Church." The Kansas Conference, the Home Mission and Church Erection Society, and the Women's Missionary Association, are uniting their efforts in aiding in the erection of this new \$30,000 building. <sup>2</sup>

Many interesting stories are told of the effect of the war on some of the local churches of the Conference, a few of them may be worth while recording at this time.

### Wilkinsburg Church

Rev. T. W. Burgess, retired minister of Allegheny Conference, told the writer that the Wilkinsburg Church was compelled to close its doors at the opening of the Civil War. All the men of the church were called

1. Weekley, W. M., and Fout, H. H. **Our Heroes**, p. 226.

2. **The Evangel**, September, 1942, pp. 240-241.

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to the service of their country, and left the church without sufficient means to carry on. Some time during the war period the roof was blown from the building in a wind storm, thus making the building untenable. The years passed, and it seemed that the appointment would be closed. In 1873, eight years after the close of the War, Rev. Burgess made a house to house canvass of the community and in the next four years saw the membership of the Church increased from four to twenty-nine. Among those who united with the Church was Joseph Long, a descendant of Isaac Long, and the father of Mrs. T. W. Burgess. He moved into the community from Bradenville in the year 1878. Thus the Wilksburg Church, which is today one of the largest churches in Allegheny Conference, was almost lost to the denomination during the period of the rebellion.

### **Altoona First Church**

The Altoona First Church of the United Brethren in Christ also underwent its share of suspense and excitement in those memorable days of the Civil War just before the Battle of Gettysburg. The following account is taken from one of the histories prepared by the local church:

It was in June before the Battle of Gettysburg that the quietness of intense excitement settled over Altoona. In expectation of a charge northward by the Southern army, work in the shops was suspended, and much of the valuable machinery stood upon trucks, ready to be moved to a place of safety should the city be attacked. Meetings were held in the churches of the city, which opened with prayer and ended with enlisting soldiers. By special order of the government, most of these were detailed for service in government



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transportation of supplies, some receiving wages from both the government and the P.R.R. company. In completing arrangements for this special service some of the employes took the oath of allegiance three times.

The United Brethren Church lacked nothing in loyalty in those trying times. From the steps of the church was organized a company, largely United Brethren, commanded by Colonel Scink, a member of the congregation, who had earned his title in the service. Pastor Kephart was a leading spirit in the organization, (E. B. Kephart) and Elder Sheerer marched with them, when with another company they marched out through Fulton and Franklin Counties, to fortify McKee's Gap against the approach of Melroy's cavalry. Many of them returned without seeing the expected foe, while others went on to other service, to meet the soldier's fate. <sup>1</sup>

### **Tyrone Church**

Perhaps the most interesting case of all was that of the Tyrone Church. The local Church built a fine two story building in 1855, but for several years after its dedication it was so burdened by a heavy debt that the trustees felt that they could not carry on the financing of the building unless they sold one half of the building. As a result a satisfactory arrangement was made with the Baptist denomination, and one half of the building was sold to them for \$600. Even this did not liquidate all of the indebtedness, and finally the other half of the building was sold by the sheriff, and bought in by the creditors. It was a sad group of churchmen that greeted Rev. J. Walker, the new

1. Funk, Mary Gardiner, *A History of the First Church of the United Brethren in Christ in Altoona, Penna.*, p. 14.



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pastor, in the year 1863. But Rev. Walker had a magnetic spirit of enthusiasm that carried the congregation with him, and under his earnest leadership funds were secured to pay off the debt for which the house had been sold. Thus they once again possessed a half interest in their building.

However, they had barely bought back their interest in the building when a company of United States soldiers took possession of it, and occupied it for several months, injuring it to the amount of at least \$600. For years the Church tried to collect damages from the Government, but was apparently never successful. The Honorable J. D. Hicks introduced a bill in Congress appropriating \$2,000 damages for the Tyrona Church in 1896. But the bill seems to have failed to pass, for there is no record of the money ever having been paid.

In 1865, the Conference brought in a resolution suggesting that the remaining half of the building be purchased from the Baptists and the whole be fitted out for an Academy Building. However, the enthusiasm for a local academy seems to have died out, for the next Conference records made no mention of the matter. The academy was to have served as a preparatory school for students who would later go to Otterbein College.

But while the Conference may have lost interest in the church building as a future academy, Rev. J. Walker and the trustees of the church had not lost faith. In 1866 they were able to buy back the half interest they had sold to the Baptist group for the same amount for which they had sold it, namely \$600.

In 1867 the work of remodeling and repairing was begun. Much damage had been done by the United States Army soldiers, but the pastor and people rallied to the work, and \$1200 was spent for repairs. On the

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day of dedication this amount was paid in full. Bishop Glossbrenner, who presided on the occasion, mentioned that the total value of the property was now \$7000 and the Church was one of the leading churches in the denomination.<sup>1</sup>

While many other stories could be told of the struggle of the Conference throughout the days of the Civil War, the above accounts give a fair sampling of the church problems of those days.

### **Attitude Toward Music**

The Church of the United Brethren in Christ has always been a conservative Church. Yet it has always been willing to keep in step with the various changes that naturally occur with the advancement in the industrial progress and culture of a country. Where many conservative denominations have seen fit to taboo new inventions, and new ideas, the United Brethren Church as a whole has attempted to harmonize them with the plan of God. To make these changes in church discipline and interpretation required both vision and courage on the part of our denominational leadership. Throughout these days of Church growth, Allegheny Conference furnished more of this progressive planning than any other Conference.

Music became an issue with the Church during the period of the Civil War, and the reconstruction days that followed. In the early days of the Church it was not a problem. Most of the appointments were at the homes of the church members, because of the lack of church buildings. Here in the home all the worshippers would unite in the group singing. In the barn meetings the group would be larger, but the same spirit of unity prevailed, and the group singing was a very definite part of their worship. To sing was the privilege of all, and to think of limiting such a Christ-

1. *Religious Telescope*, April 1, 1868.

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ian experience to a group of trained singers was unthinkable.

When the small organ became an acceptable aid to worship in many other denominations, the United Brethren Church was slow to accept it. It was a sign of worldliness and as such was not in keeping with the traditions of the Church fathers.

In the 1861 Discipline, under the heading of Music, there was the following resolution: "We therefore kindly forbid the introduction of choirs into any of our churches." <sup>1</sup> Instrumental music was also prohibited to the local churches.

At this time the Allegheny Conference was also opposed both to choral singing and to the use of musical instruments in the church services. In 1866 the information came to the Conference in session that Otterbein College Chapel had an organ installed for the use of the Westerville Congregation. At this date the Westerville Church did not have a separate building, and was using the College Chapel as a house of worship. While the sentiment for music of an instrumental nature was growing in the Allegheny Conference, it was not yet at the advanced stage where it was being openly advocated for the local churches. As a result the Conference in session formulated the following resolution:

Whereas, the Congregation at Westerville, Ohio, has introduced instrumental music into their religious services in violation of the discipline, thereby grieving many and causing dissensions in the church;  
Resolved, therefore that we "kindly advise" the brethren in Westerville to discontinue the use of instrumental music in their religious services. <sup>2</sup>

1. **United Brethren Church Discipline**, 1861, p. 96.
2. **Religious Telescope**, March 22, 1866.



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The Board of Trustees of Otterbein College then made answer through the pages of the **Religious Telescope** by publishing the following account of their action, with an attached comment by Rev. J. Weaver, the writer of the article:

It was resolved that the board instruct the faculty and agents to discontinue the use of instrumental music in the college chapel during the public worship of God.

Last Sabbath was the first Sabbath after the passage of the above resolution, and the organ being small, and easily handled, was quietly rolled away in the corner, without uttering one word of complaint, or sending forth a single sound. The minister preached and the people sang and prayed as aforetime.<sup>1</sup>

But Allegheny Conference was quick to reverse her policy on the question of music. Only three years later at the Conference held in Altoona during the week of January 28, 1869, the secretary commented very favorably upon the use of the organ in the Altoona First United Brethren Church. The account read as follows:

At 2½ o'clock P. M. the fine and very orderly Sabbath School connected with the church, met the ministers and visitors in a Sabbath School convention. The beautiful singing of the children, accompanied by the mellow strains of the organ, touched the heart and lit up the countenance of everyone who sat under the sweet and soul inspiring notes, uttered by infant tongues from happy hearts.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Religious Telescope**, June 27, 1866.

2. **Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Session of Allegheny Conference**, p. 9.



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In spite of this fine commendation from the Conference, the local Church in Altoona had its own trials and tribulations over the installation of this musical aid to worship. So incensed were some of the church membership, that they withdrew from the local congregation, and united with a similar group from the First Methodist Episcopal Church, and formed the Chestnut Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. This new church purchased an organ in 1885.<sup>1</sup>

In 1869 General Conference recognized the sentiment for a change in discipline regarding the music regulation. At that time the "We kindly forbid" clause had been tempered by the statement, "We believe it to be the duty of all the people of God to sing his praises, and to sing them in the great congregation as well as in the private circle. We would therefore earnestly recommend to all our people the cultivation of vocal music so that singing in congregations may be improved."<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Edwards made the following amendment to this disciplinary stand: "We hereby earnestly advise our societies to avoid the introduction of choirs and instrumental music into their worship."<sup>3</sup>

While this suggested amendment still negated the use of music in the churches, while not actually forbidding it, the ire of the old school brethren was raised to fighting pitch, and a warm discussion followed.

One of the brethren finally mentioned that the old Otterbein Church in Baltimore had both a choir and organ. At first this statement was warmly disputed, but proof was finally given that the mother Church of the denomination had "gone modernistic," and the opposition forces were somewhat subdued. It was at this

1. Funk, Mary Gardiner, **A History of the First Church, Altoona, Pennsylvania**, p. 14.

2. **General Conference Proceedings**, 1869, pp. 192-193.

3. **General Conference Proceedings**, 1869, p. 193

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time that Rev. W. B. Dick, one of the outstanding ministers of the Allegheny Conference arose and made the following statement that was climatic in causing the General Conference to accept the Edwards amendment:

At one time I opposed instrumental music in churches. I spoke against it, and conscientiously too. But I have received light and have been thoroughly converted. . . . . In my own experience I have seen the good occasioned by choir singing. It has almost saved the Church in the town where I reside; for at one time there were in the congregation so few who could sing, that everything was almost dead as regards spirituality and influence. When my people expressed a desire to procure an organ, I protested against it because it was in violation of the rule. When they expressed a determination in that direction, I begged them not to place me in such a position that the General Conference would regard me as a transgressor. They said, "We are the church; we are the congregation; we are paying your salary; we are paying our missionary money; we are paying every claim that is laid upon us; do not interfere and it will be all right." Well I had nothing more to say. And with all my early prejudice, I say before heaven here today that I can go into my congregation, and with feelings as purely devotional as I ever possessed in my heart, worship the God of Heaven. And we have a greater increase in our membership, and larger congregations than we ever had before.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

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Johnstown First Church was the church to which Rev. Dick had reference in the above statement. From this time on until 1885 the "Avoidance" clause remained in the Discipline. By that time music was no longer an issue, most of the churches having secured organs and other musical aids to worship. At the 1885 Conference the clause was quietly omitted from the Discipline and music received the full sanction of the Church.

### Post Civil War Church Building

The post-War period saw a new impetus given to church building. The buying back, remodeling, and dedication of the Tyrone church has already been mentioned.

The Altoona Mission Church was remodeled in 1869 to the extent of \$3000 in expenditures. During the time of dedication a revival service was held, and 80 more members were added to the Church whose total membership had been only 68.

W. B. Dick, the Presiding Elder of the Western District in 1870, gave a glowing account of the dedication of the Wilmore Church. The building was described as being 46 feet in width and 65 feet in length. It was 2 stories in height. The total expenditure was \$5000, which was quite a large amount of money to be spent on a church building in that day. Rev. Dick commented on the dedication as follows: "I regard this as the second best finished house in the Conference." Johnstown Church alone would have been considered to be a more commodious building. Rev. Dick went on further to say: "The total cost of the building was over subscribed by \$200 on the day of dedication. Brother Waggoner preached in the evening. When I stated that \$1500 had been secured on this day, someone shouted 'Glory to God' and the congregation sang 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.' Brother



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Strayer was the pastor.”<sup>1</sup> He was the Rev. Daniel Strayer, a great uncle to the two brothers, Rev. J. F. Strayer and Dr. George Strayer, who today are active ministers in Allegheny Conference.

A year preceding the dedication of the Wilmore Church, the new Johnstown First Church was dedicated. The pastor under whose leadership the building was erected was Rev. W. B. Dick, the same individual who later served as Presiding Elder. The prominence and beauty of this building is best understood by noting an account printed in the **Religious Telescope**, and written by Rev. W. J. Shuey, the publishing agent at that time. He wrote the following:

.....The Allegheny Conference was convened in Johnstown, Pa. Johnstown is a very lively town of some twelve thousand inhabitants. It's main support is the Cambria Iron Company, which has extensive works there for the manufacture of iron and other mountain products. With slight exceptions the city is not well built. The churches are its best buildings, and speak well for the religious influence of the place. The United Brethren Church built by the indefatigable labors of Rev. W. B. Dick is without question the best house of worship in the denomination. It is 48 by 72 feet, built of stone, in Gothic style, and finished throughout in a most symmetrical manner. The society numbers about one hundred and twenty members, and such are the comforts and attractions of their church that the congregation bids fair soon to fill every seat in the house.<sup>2</sup>

That this building was considered the best in the entire denomination at the time of its construction

1. **Religious Telescope**, December 7, 1870.

2. **Religious Telescope**, February 9, 1870.



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spoke well for the spirit of progress that was evidenced throughout all of Allegheny Conference during this period. It survived the ravages of the first Johnstown Flood, and was razed only when the time came to provide an even more spacious building.

In the same article quoted above, Rev. Shuey also made the statement that Allegheny Conference was at this time paying the highest salaries to her ministers of any of the Conferences of the denomination.

In 1871 W. B. Dick wrote mentioning the dedication of the Knoxville Mission. The building was 30 by 40 feet in size, and cost \$1018. In closing his communication, Rev. Dick said: "Our Conference is waking up to the importance of building churches so as to give the church permanence. We have built and dedicated 5 houses in this district this year."

One of the more progressive rural churches of the Allegheny Conference is the Mt. Olive Church on the Fayette Charge. At the time of the dedication of its first church building, it was considered to be one of the finest rural churches in the Conference.

As early as 1856, Rev. William Shimp wrote that he had organized a class at Pennsville, while serving as pastor of the Springfield Charge. In the minutes of the 1857 Conference there occurs the statement that the Walnut Hill and the Detwiler Appointments be connected with the Springfield Circuit. This implies that these classes were at least in existence in 1856, and in all probability had existed for many years before that date. The Detwiler Appointment occupied the territory in the beautiful valley farmlands where the Mt. Olive Church is now located.

Sometime later these two Appointments, Pennsville and Detwiler, were placed on the same charge and combined to form one appointment. On the nineteenth of November a beautiful rural church was dedicated,

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and concerning the dedication, Rev. D. Speck, the Presiding Elder of the Western District wrote the following record:

It was my privilege on the 19th of November to assist in the dedication of a new and beautiful country church on Westmoreland Circuit, Allegheny Conference. Brother Strayer is the pastor and has shown a commendable zeal in helping to bring this church enterprise to completion. The house would be an honor to any community as it is in every respect just what it should be. It is a frame building 34-42 feet with a 16 foot ceiling, making it a finely proportioned building.

The seats are of chestnut with walnut caps and scrolls. The pulpit is chestnut and walnut, of beautiful design, and artistically made. In fact it is one of the finest country church houses we have in the Conference. Finished and furnished completely it cost about \$2,200. On the day of dedication there were wanting about \$700, and some of the friends of the enterprise looked blue enough, but to work we went, and did not stop until there were secured \$800 in good subscription. Now if you wish a good church house, get Brother Strayer to plan it, and such brethren and friends as are about the Detwiler Appointment to pay for it, and such mechanics as built the Mt. Olive Church, and I will insure you not to fail.<sup>1</sup>

This building served the community well until the year 1931, when it was found necessary to enlarge and remodel it. A fine primary room was added to the Church, a kitchen provided, and a complete change

1. **Religious Telescope**, December 20, 1871.

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made in the worship room. The total cost of these repairs was \$3,275. The building was rededicated on the twenty-eighth of October, 1931.

### Camp Meetings

Another important feature of this era of Allegheny Conference history was the camp meeting. From the very early days of Conference history the camp meeting was the outstanding instrument used for the purpose of evangelism during the summer months. The earlier camp meetings have been discussed in the former pages of this history. The camp meeting of this period had become more of a professionalized organization. Two camps gradually became the most important ones in the movement, namely, the Pringledale Camp and the Bigler Camp.

The Pringledale Camp was in Cambria County, just outside the town of Wilmore. It is particularly notable for its being the host of the first fall meeting of Allegheny Conference. The February minutes refer to the change from spring to fall Conferences with these words: "The Bishop was requested to change the time of our meeting to next September. Pringledale was selected as the place of holding the next Conference."<sup>1</sup>

The Short Conference was opened in the Wilmore Church, and then adjourned to meet at the Pringledale Camp. During the sessions of the Conference seven conversions were listed.

The Bigler Camp became even better known for its large camp meetings. The account of the Camp Meeting of 1888 as reported by Rev. J. H. Pershing gives a picture of the Camp at the zenith of its power and influence. The writer was inclined to judge that the attendance figure of 12,000 was an exaggeration

1. Minutes of the 41st Annual Conference Session of Allegheny Conference, p. 16.



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until he spoke with some of the older men of the Conference who remembered some of the old camp meetings. They have completely verified the picture which was painted by Rev. Pershing in the following account:

I suppose the Bigler Camp-meeting draws the biggest crowd of any camp meeting in our church. I had the pleasure of attending the camp and witnessing the sight of what many called a crowd of ten thousand people. Some estimated the crowd as high as twelve thousand. During the evenings of the week there was as large a crowd as some other camp meetings I have attended had on Sabbath. Then the people have large hearts. They know how to treat one. They board the preachers and their wives and pay the preachers' expenses. No wonder the camp was a success when they pay over three hundred dollars for preachers' expenses. Bishop Kephart, President Kephart, and Dr. Booth were present besides others of camp meeting fame. The gate receipts were some twelve or thirteen hundred dollars. The children's services were somewhat of an attraction this year, the children being entertained with blackboard and object lessons. A women's prayer meeting was a new feature of the camp this year. It is proposed to pay the expenses of the preachers wives next year in addition to what they are doing. The Bigler Camp Meeting is surely second to none in our Church and I think that it is ahead of all others in some of its features. . . . I have attended thirty five camp meetings within thirty two years and conclude that this is the best one in all its parts. <sup>1</sup>

1. Religious Telescope, September 12, 1888.



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It must not be supposed that these camps were without their problems. Camp followers, who sold liquor and engaged in gambling and other non-Christian practices, were always nearby to cause disturbances. This was especially true when the camp became so exceptionally large.

A fire of unknown origin caused the destruction of all the beautiful shade trees and the buildings of the Bigler Camp on the afternoon of April 27, 1906. The estimated financial loss was \$5,000. The loss in trees and other beauties of nature could not be estimated. The association that had governed the Camp met in 1908 and decided to sell the ground and turn the proceeds over to the preachers' fund of the Conference. This was the last of the great camp meetings. A new age and new social conditions had made them impracticable.

### Conference Leaders

We have mentioned from time to time the increasing impetus that Allegheny Conference gave toward education. She, above all other Conferences, urged the founding of colleges and seminaries throughout the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It was only natural that as a result of her enthusiasm for education, Allegheny Conference was able to educate many of her men, and place them in posts of outstanding leadership in the denomination. During the era of 1861 to 1889, Allegheny Conference gave more leaders to the United Brethren Church than any other Conference.

At one time the men of Allegheny Conference held the following offices throughout the Church of the United Brethren in Christ: Editor of the **Religious Telescope**, President of Otterbein College, Lebanon Valley College, Western College, Westfield College, Avalon College, and a bishop of the Church. In addi-

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tion to these high positions of honor, several others were engaged in the teaching profession of the various colleges, one was a college pastor, and another was a field representative. This was the period of Allegheny Conference's highest educational standing in denominational work.

Since complete biographies have been given of the lives of many of these Church leaders, it will be obvious that only a minute sketch of their work can be presented in connection with a history of the Conference. Their work has been so outstanding and so influential on the General Church that a brief picture of their contributions is inescapable at this time.

### **President H. A. Thompson**

H. A. Thompson was one of the first of the outstanding educators of Allegheny Conference. He was born on the twenty-third of March, 1837, and was graduated from Jefferson College, now Washington and Jefferson, in 1858. He was received into the Conference in 1860 and was immediately assigned to the Pittsburgh Mission as a pastor. He served in that capacity for two years, and then went to Otterbein College as a teacher. He held the office of president from 1872 until 1886. During this period of time he was a strenuous worker in reform movements, and in 1880 was the candidate for the Vice President of the United States on the Prohibition ticket. He was twice candidate for Governor of the State of Ohio. He was a prolific writer, being a constant contributor to the **Religious Telescope**, as well as author of many writings including the books entitled **Our Bishops**, **The Biography of Bishop Weaver**, **Schools of the Prophets**, and **Women of the Bible**. He was associate-editor of Sunday School literature from 1893 to 1897, and served as editor-in-chief from 1897 until 1901. In 1901 he became the editor of the **Quarterly Review** and

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served in that capacity until his retirement in 1909. He died at Dayton, Ohio, on the eighth of July, 1920.

At the 1882 Conference, President Thompson, having just returned from a trip to the Holy Land, presented to the Conference a beautiful gavel made of olive wood, purchased by him while in Jerusalem. This very fine and valued gift has since become lost to the knowledge of the Conference officials. It is of interest to note that the acceptance speech was made by the president of the second largest college of the denomination, also an Allegheny Conference minister, President A. L. Delong of Lebanon Valley College. He moved a vote of thanks to Dr. Thompson for his kind remembrance of the Conference. This resolution was unanimously adopted.<sup>1</sup>

### David D. Delong

David D. Delong was a graduate of Otterbein College and of the Allegheny Theological Seminary. In 1871 he was received into Allegheny Conference as a licensed minister. In 1873 he became the pastor of the Mt. Pleasant Church. Three years later, President E. B. Kephart of Western College, located in Western Iowa, persuaded him to become a professor at that institution. A year later he was called to the presidency of Lebanon Valley College, and served the Church in that capacity until 1887 when he resigned and entered the Congregational Church. It was during his administration that a building for art, music, science, and library purposes was erected.

Other leading educators of that period were Professor W. J. Zuck of Lebanon Valley College, Professor George A. Funkhouser, Greek Exegesis 1871-1912 at Union Biblical, later Bonebrake Theological Seminary; Professor George Keister, Hebrew Exegesis and Biblical History, 1875 until his death in 1880; Rev. L. H.

1. **Religious Telescope**, November 22, 1882.



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Stahl, General Financial Agent for Lebanon Valley College; Professor A. L. Delong, teacher at Western College; S. B. Allen, Professor at Otterbein College, and later president of Westfield College; and Rev. J. B. Ressler, who served as field agent for Otterbein College, for Bonebrake Theological Seminary (then Union Biblical Seminary), and for Lebanon Valley College.

But surpassing all of these in denominational importance was an inspired group of three brothers, whose educational and promotional influence was greater than that of any other family on the destinies of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. They were Ezekiel Boring Kephart, Isaiah Lafayette Kephart and Cyrus Jeffries Kephart. All three men were masterful in their leadership of the Church, two of them becoming Bishops, thus attaining the highest spiritual and executive position in the church, and the third served as the Editor of the **Religious Telescope** for 19 years, and as such was the dominating voice throughout the entire denomination.

The early Kepharts were a Swiss family. Cyrus J. Kephart, in writing of his family background, mentioned that there were 23 different spellings of the name. Nicholas Kephart, great grandfather of the 3 brothers, emigrated from Switzerland some time prior to 1770 to Berks County, Pennsylvania. In 1801 he moved with his son, Henry, Sr., to Center County, Pennsylvania. He was buried in the old "Abram Goss Cemetery" on a hill one mile east of the present town of Osceola.<sup>1</sup>

### Henry Kephart

Henry Kephart, Jr., was the grandson of Nicholas and was well known for his retentive memory, and his

1. Kephart, Cyrus J., and Funk, William R., **Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart**, pp. 15-16.



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exceptional ability to quote the Scriptures. He was married to Sarah Goss on the twenty-third of March, 1826. A description of their early home is given in the opening pages of this record. Their interest in education was manifested in their gift of \$25 to Mt. Pleasant College, which was mentioned in connection with that institution. This gift led directly to the education of the three sons who became outstanding in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

### **Isaiah Lafayette Kephart**

Isaiah Lafayette Kephart, the eldest of the sons, and fourth child in a family of 13 children, was born on the tenth of December, 1832. After completing his college education at Mt. Pleasant College and Otterbein College (then Otterbein University), he returned to Allegheny Conference with his brother, Ezekiel Boring, and received a license to preach the gospel in 1859. In the 1863 Conference, the committee on the Third Year Course of Study made the following report: "E. B. Kephart's essay gave satisfaction, but I. L. Kephart's, while good as to matter, was somewhat deficient in orthog. (Orthography or spelling)." <sup>1</sup> This must have proven both interesting and amusing to the brilliant writer of later years.

Concerning his first pastorate in 1859, he wrote the following interesting account that paints a vivid picture of the work of the minister in the days immediately preceding the Civil War:

The appointments were as follows: Kesler's (in a church-house) two miles above the cherry-tree, Sunday, 10:30 A. M.; Summerville (in a school house), distance five miles, same Sunday, 2:30 P. M.; McKees (in a church-house), same Sunday distance four miles, 7:00 P. M.; Jos. Ow's (in Brother

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1863, p. 6.

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Ow's private house) , Wednesday evening, distance ten miles; Levi Laymaster's (in his private house) near Marion, Indiana County, distance about ten miles, Thursday evening; John Laymaster's or John Snyder's (in private house), Friday evening, distance about twelve miles; McGee's (school house), distance eighteen miles, Sunday 10:30 A. M.; Mt. Joy (church house), Sunday, 2:30 P.M., distance five miles; Simon Raudabaugh's (school house), Sunday 7:00 P.M., distance eight miles; Charley Smith's (private house), Wednesday evening, distance three miles; Newburg (meeting-house), Sunday, 10:30 A.M., distance eight miles; Koozer's (school house) Sunday 2:30 P. M., distance seven miles; Pleasant Hill (school house) 7:00 P. M., distance six miles; from thence returning to Kessler's, distance twenty-five miles, to beginning of next round. From the above it will be seen that I had thirteen appointments; that to fill them I preached three times each Sunday and four times on weekday evenings; that I filled these appointments once every three week's, and in doing so I traveled (on horseback) a distance of one hundred and twenty-four miles.

I had no regular home—just boarded among the members, all of whom were kind and accorded me a royal welcome to their homes. I carried my books and linen in a pair of huge saddlebags. <sup>1</sup>

In 1863 Rev. I. L. Kephart enlisted as a Chaplain

1. Kephart, Cyrus J., and Funk, William R., **Life of Rev. Isaiah L. Kephart**, p. 88.

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in the Union Army. He participated in 19 engagements in front of Richmond and Petersburg, and in the final campaign resulting in the surrender of Lee." <sup>1</sup> Some of his letters are given in connection with the Civil War period as it is discussed in this chapter.

He later served as a teacher in Western College, and was president of Westfield College, from which position he was elected to the office of Editor of the **Religious Telescope**. He served in this capacity until the close of his life, October 28, 1908.

### Ezekiel Boring Kephart

Ezekiel Boring Kephart was born on the sixth of November, 1834, the second son and fifth child in the Kephart home. He was the constant companion of I. L. Kephart both in early life on their father's farm and in the educational institutions that they attended. Both came back to Allegheny Conference for employment in 1859. The First Year's Study Course Committee made the following recommendation of his work:

E. B. Kephart afterward appeared before your committee and was examined. We are tolerably well satisfied with his definitions and quotations on the various doctrines. He evidences a general knowledge of the subjects but had not much knowledge of the book recommended in the course. On Grammar and Geography in our opinion he passed a fair examination and produced a tolerably fair essay. Therefore, we, all things considered, recommend that he pass. <sup>2</sup>

The next year, after serving two other charges, Rev. E. B. Kephart was appointed to the Altoona Station. Concerning his ministry there, there is this very

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 568.

2. **Allegheny Conference Minutes**, 1860, p. 3.

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humorous story told of one of his pastoral contacts, as follows:

One time while driving through the country visiting, he met one of his members who had subscribed to his salary, but thought he could not meet his obligations because of some reverses. Stopping, he said: "Brother Kephart, I lost a fine calf yesterday, and I shall not be able now to pay you the six dollars I subscribed." In his deliberate manner the pastor answered: 'Very well brother, since you can't afford to lose the calf, I will have to lose it,' and drove on. The brother sat a short time in a dazed condition looking after the pastor. Later the six dollars came.<sup>1</sup>

In 1868 he was called to the presidency of Western College where he served for 13 years. Then the Church called him to the office of Bishop in 1881, and from that date until his retirement in 1905 he continued in that position of honor. Death came on the twenty-fourth of January, 1906, while he was assisting in a financial campaign in the interest of Indiana Central College.

A very fitting summary of his life work is found in his last address to the General Conference of 1905, in which he requested a retired relationship. His closing words were these:

My life in the service of the church is known, and I have nothing to say respecting it. I feel this morning brethren, like the old pagan Roman did. He was the greatest Roman of them all. He said, when he was in years, about where I am in life, 'If the gods were to give me the privilege to become a

1. John, Lewis Franklin, D. D., **The Life of Ezekiel Boring Kephart**, p. 124, Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House (1907).



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baby again, and be rocked in the cradle, I would not accept it, in that I think that I have lived my life well.' And I say that I think I have served my Church well, and the cause of God well. I have never had a single reflection to cast upon my Church for its treatment of me. Those who are here, with whom I have associated in the religion that I sustain to-day, and every relation that I have sustained to the Church, know me, that my life has been open and frank, and what I had to say and what I had to do, I always did it, not coveting the smiles on the one hand, nor regarding the frowns on the other, when it came to a sense of duty. God bless you. <sup>1</sup>

By a unanimous resolution he was voted an emeritus relationship, which relationship he held to the date of his death. His outstanding achievements in unifying the Church during the days of the secrecy problem will be noted later. He, more than any other man, was instrumental in the change of the Constitution that led to the later rapid growth of the denominational church.

### Cyrus Jeffries Kephart

Cyrus Jeffries Kephart was the thirteenth and youngest child in the Kephart family. He was born on the twenty-third of February, 1852. He was never a member of the Allegheny Conference, although raised in Allegheny Territory, because his father and mother and their children followed E. B. Kephart to Iowa, where he was president of Western College. As a result, C. J. Kephart graduated from the College over which the brother presided as president, in the year 1874 and then became a member of the Iowa Conference. Dr. A. W. Drury said of him, "He combined the

1. Op. Cit., p. 294

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facility of his brother, I. L. Kephart with the massive force of his brother E. B. Kephart." <sup>1</sup>

No man ever had a more versatile career. He was pastor of several of the largest churches of the denomination, teacher at Avalon and Western Colleges, president of Lebanon Valley and Avalon Colleges, general secretary of the Pennsylvania Sabbath School Association, and finally Bishop of the Church. Against these frequent changes, his brother, Bishop E. B. Kephart sometimes remonstrated but to no avail. And with all the work accomplished, he still found time to write prolifically, listing among his better books, **The Public Life of Christ** and **Christianity and the Social Weal**.

Death closed the earthly career of this outstanding churchman on July 20, 1932.

### **The Question of Secret Societies**

Having scanned the lives of the outstanding denominational leaders that represented our Conference during this period, we turn now to a discussion of the most outstanding problem faced by the Church of the United Brethren in Christ throughout all her history.

The question of belonging to secret organizations had always plagued the Church. From the very earliest moment of her organized existence, the United Brethren Church had opposed membership in any secret organization. The Constitution of 1841, the first Constitution having been adopted by the 1837 General Conference, had this statement in it: "There shall be no connection with secret combinations."

In 1849 a test vote showed that the entire Church was opposed to membership with any secret organization and such membership automatically led to the expulsion of the member involved. The decision was in favor of the secrecy clause by a vote of 33 to 2. The

1. Drury, A. W., **History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ**, p. 545.

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2 delegates who opposed the stand on secrecy were from the Virginia Conference.

Rev. J. B. Ressler brought a resolution to the 1857 General Conference asking for a more liberal interpretation of the secrecy clause, and was immediately crushed with a 46 to 5 vote. He had mentioned in defense of his resolution that in the cities, working men belonging to secret societies were prohibited from uniting with the Church. He was ably supported by Rev. W. B. Dick, co-Allegheny Conference representative. But Allegheny and Virginia Conferences alone were for modification. From this date on Allegheny Conference consistently voted for a modification of the secrecy law.

The Allegheny Conference delegation to the General Conference in 1869 attended the convention with the purpose of making the secrecy law advisory. The outstanding champions of the movement for modification were W. B. Dick and D. Speck. D. Sheerer was the third member of the Allegheny Delegation. As the discussion grew more and more heated, W. B. Dick made the statement that in the Cincinnati meeting in 1857, he was not even permitted to speak his mind on the question of modification of the secrecy law. When questioned by the chair as to what he meant, he said:

In reference to crushing down in the Cincinnati Conference, I am prepared to say, sir, that a member there rose to speak and not less than twelve to fifteen members rose in that body, to their feet, and said, 'We don't want to hear.'<sup>1</sup>

The chairman then interrogated, "Did they not hear him"?

W. B. Dick then responded:

They did not hear him. I was the man myself, and I concluded that I was not considered

1. General Conference Proceedings, 1869, p. 140.



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competent, and consequently, if so many would rise to object, I did not speak.<sup>1</sup>

The debate continued with warm discussion for some time, until another Allegheny Conference leader, Rev. D. Speck arose to the support of his colleague and made the following statement:

I am still opposed to secret societies, and do not think because I have identified myself with the minority report that I necessarily am not opposed to secret societies. Here in this minority report we have a 'Testimony against secret societies' . . . . I read in the good book that upon a certain occasion the disciples were gathered together and the door locked. That was a secret meeting of the disciples and the Spirit of God led Peter to that place. Now if it is wrong for God's people to be found anywhere in secret, these disciples committed a great error.<sup>2</sup>

After considerable more debate a vote was called for, and the majority report, defending the status quo was adopted by the vote of 72 to 25. But the vote itself showed that the increase in opposition was rising under the leadership of the Allegheny Conference men.

Again in 1873, the Allegheny Conference voted solidly against the secrecy law, and again they led the opposition movement, this time under the leadership of Rev. M. P. Doyle.

At the Wilmore Conference in 1876 the members of Allegheny Conference put themselves on record before the Church with a unique series of resolutions that were to throw open the question to the whole denomination for discussion. Their strong stand against

1. General Conference Proceedings, 1869, p. 140.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.



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the status quo showed forth the courageous and visionary spirit of the Conference leadership at this time. The following record appeared in the minutes, and was reprinted in the **Religious Telescope**:

Whereas much agitation and difference of opinion prevails throughout the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, in regard to the prohibitory law on secret societies, whereby the peace of the church is greatly disturbed, her unity endangered and her growth and prosperity hindered, therefore, Resolved,- That we discourage and discount all irritating and unChristian controversy on the question, from whatever source it may come.

Whereas, We, the ministers of Allegheny Conference are opposed to secret societies, and only differ from our brethren in regard to the manner of treating those belonging to them, and in vindicating our position before the Church, therefore,

Resolved,- That we adopt the following testimony: We believe that secret societies are for various reasons objectionable and easily susceptible of abuse to evil ends, and when thus abused are calculated to do great mischief in church and state, and we believe that the real good which these societies profess to seek, may generally be obtained by open methods, not so likely to such abuse and therefore we pronounce our earnest judgment against these orders, and beseech and admonish all of our ministers and members to abstain from all connection with them.

We hold these views to be in harmony with the Holy Word of God and compatible with the magnanimous spirit of our church and

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nation and in the fear of God commend these principles to the Christian consideration of all. <sup>1</sup>

In a second report issued in connection with the report on publishing interests there was this brief statement at the close of the resolutions: "Resolved that we cannot endorse the arbitrary course pursued by our editors on the secrecy question." <sup>2</sup>

When this item was republished by the **Religious Telescope**, the editor, J. W. Hott, followed the statement by a paragraph enclosed by parentheses in which he said:

This resolution is totally inconsistent with the main paper adopted, and so wholly unfounded in fact, that no one can doubt its being instigated by individuals, who by absolute misrepresentations led this intelligent and enterprising Conference to take this supplementary action so little credible to this honorable body. <sup>3</sup>

The Conference next met in session at Altoona, January seventeenth, 1877. When the report on Publishing Interests was brought in it included a fine complementary section on the general work of the **Religious Telescope** and the other church papers of that day, and then followed this with the additional statement:

Resolved that we also request said editors in future to publish our Conference minutes when sent to them, without any additions of their own. <sup>4</sup>

The editor of the **Religious Telescope** responded to this brief reprimand with a thousand word defense

1. **Allegheny Conference Minutes**, 1876, p. 13.

2. **Ibid.**, p. 12.

3. **Religious Telescope**, February 9, 1876.

4. **Ibid.**, February 7, 1877.

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of his act in attaching his own opinion to the printed Minutes. In part he said:

It is a sad thing if men are to be assailed and abused in the discharge of their official duties in our Zion, **simply because they believe in, love, and advocate the principles contained in the constitution and law of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.** Is it the policy to wantonly assail character in the interests of innovation? <sup>1</sup>

The 1877 General Conference again took up the matter of modification of the secrecy question, but again the more liberal group were overwhelmed by a vote of 71 to 31.

In 1881 the General Conference largely evaded the issue of the secrecy question, but elected one of its most liberal men to the office of Bishop, namely, E. B. Kephart.

To open the question on secrecy the Allegheny Conference memorialized the General Conference of 1885 in the following resolution:

Resolved that we, the members of the Allegheny Conference assembled in session do hereby memorialize the next General Conference to modify or annul the law on secrecy.<sup>2</sup>

The Bishop's address of the General Conference of 1885 was ordered prepared by the junior Bishop, E. B. Kephart, a man born and raised within the bounds of Allegheny Conference. With the secrecy question looming as a possible basis for Church disintegration, the challenge to the man whose address was to strike the key note of the convention was tremendous. In his own handwriting, Bishop Kephart wrote a postscript to this manuscript which he had prepared for the

1. **Religious Telescope**, February 7, 1877.

2. **Allegheny Conference Minutes**, 1884, p. 30.

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opening address. It read, "The above was put into form during the month of April, 1885. That part which relates to secret societies was written impromptu, after much prayer and meditation."<sup>1</sup> When he presented the sermon to Bishop Weaver, that he might preview it, the latter said to him in his characteristic familiar way: "Kep, you've got it sure. That is just what we want." At the conclusion of his address, at the General Conference of 1885, held in Fostoria, Ohio, Bishop Kephart placed the issue fairly before the Conference with these words:

We need not say to your honorable body that the subject of secret societies has become a most perplexing one in our Zion; this is well known to you all. Also, it is expected of you by the people whom you represent that, under the blessing of God, you will put this subject to rest and bring peace to the Church by wise regulations. To this end we recommend: 1. In that it is admitted that our present Constitution has not yet been submitted to a vote of the whole society, you determine whether the whole subject under consideration is or is not yet in the hands of the General Conference. 2. Should you determine that it is in your hands, then transfer the whole subject from the realm of constitutional law to the field of legislative enactment, which would be to expunge the whole question from the constitution, and bring it into the field of legislative enactment, to be handled as the Church, through her representatives, may determine from time to time. 3. That you limit the prohibitory feature of your enactment to combinations secret and

1. John, Lewis F., *Life of E. B. Kephart*, p. 175.



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open, to which the Church believes a Christian cannot belong. . .4. Should you decide that this constitutional question is beyond your control, and in the hands of the whole society, then submit the above propositions, properly formulated, to a vote of the whole society, and let a two-thirds vote of those voting be the authoritative voice of the Church on the subject.

Dear Brethren, when your rules on this, as on other questions, strictly harmonize with the letter and spirit of the Gospel, it will bring concord to the Church, not dissension and strife.

The history of the Church clearly demonstrates three things essential to success: 1st. an energetic, self-sacrificing, and aggressive ministry. . .2. a consecrated pious membership. . .3. the enduement of the Holy Spirit, which the Head of the Church has promised alike to his ministers and people. Without these the Church may despair of success. With them her star of power and holy influence will continue to rise.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the address the Church knew that the matter was now in the hands of the Conference, and that action must result.

Immediately following the close of the sermon, one of the conservative group rushed up to him and said: "Bishop, if this report is adopted a thousand members will leave the Church." In his grave manner the Bishop replied: "Well, my brother, if it is not adopted, one hundred thousand members will leave it."<sup>2</sup> The very sincerity of his reply, and his most positive manner won a large vote for the measure immediately.

1. John, Lewis F., *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

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A hundred pages of bitter debate are recorded as a result of the opening of the secrecy issue, but finally the outcome was victorious, and a commission was formed which defined a secret society in the sense of the Constitution to mean "a secret league or confederation of persons holding principles and laws at variance with the Word of God and infringing upon the natural, social, political, or religious rights of those outside its pale." This same definition is now found in the Constitution of the present Church Discipline of 1941 on the sixteenth page, Article III, Section I, with but very little change. The new Constitution and a revised change in the Confession of Faith were then ordered presented to the entire Church membership during the month of November, 1888, just three years and a half from the sitting of Conference. This late date was set to give the utmost time to the leaders of the Church to present the matter fully to the general Church.

During the following interim, Bishop Kephart was tireless in his efforts to educate the Church to the meaning of the suggested change. He toured every section of the home church with the exception of the Pacific area. When the final ballot was counted, it revealed a complete vindication of the view held by Allegheny Conference and the more liberal brethren of the Church, for the final vote revealed that of the total of 54,369 votes cast, there were 51,076 in favor of the revised Confession of Faith, and 50,685 in favor of the amended Constitution.

On May 13, 1889, Bishop Kephart was presiding when the time came to read the proclamation. He read as follows:

We do hereby publish and proclaim the document thus voted to be the Confession of Faith and

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Constitution of the United Brethren in Christ, and we hereby pass from under the old and legislate under the amended Constitution. <sup>1</sup>

It was a great victory for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and a fine tribute to the leadership of Bishop E. B. Kephart. Both the Constitution and Confession of Faith remain the same until this date. "

Because of the mention made of the Confession of Faith and its revision, let us here note that the only change made was in its form of construction, and in no sense did its interpretation affect the cardinal creeds of the Church.

### **Association with Lebanon Valley College**

During the period 1882 to 1891, the Allegheny Conference found herself uniting her educational efforts with Lebanon Valley College. It came about in this manner, as told by the following resolutions in the minutes of the 1882 Conference:

**Whereas** in the years of the past the Allegheny Conference found it convenient to unite its educational interests with the brethren of the west. And,

**Whereas** in the providence of God, circumstances have so far improved that we have now a college within our own state and convenient to our fields of labor to which the Conference has been and is instinctively turning. Therefore,

**Resolved**, that we the Allegheny Conference in session assembled at Wayne Church, Mifflin County, Pa., do, on this 29th day of September, 1882, cease to cooperate as a Conference with Otterbein University, and that we do hereby unite with our own people of the East at Lebanon Valley College in our Conference educational efforts.....

1. John, Lewis F., *Op. cit.*, pp. 188 - 189.



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Resolved further, that this act of withdrawal from Otterbein University is not done as opposition to said institution, but in the spirit of kindness and brotherly love, and that in ceasing to cooperate with it longer as a Conference, we extend to it our warmest sympathies, and earnest prayers for its future usefulness and prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

With the passing of D. D. Delong from the presidency of Lebanon Valley College, the ties that united that institution with Allegheny Conference seemed to dissolve, and in 1891, the Conference passed a resolution to transfer its cooperation back to Otterbein University. From that date Otterbein has been the cooperating College of the Conference.

In closing the discussion for this period of expansion and change, it is well to mention briefly several organizations that had their inception at that time.

### **New Organizations**

**Women's Missionary Society.** In 1878 the work of the Women's Missionary Association in Allegheny Conference was opened. Mrs. J. K. Bilheimer, the first woman in the United Brethren Church to do mission work in Africa, came to Johnstown and there met with representatives of the women who came from various parts of the Conference. From that moment this splendid organization has been a strong arm of the Conference and of the Church. A fuller account of the growth and progress of this organization will be found in Dr. J. S. Fulton's **History of the Allegheny Conference.**

**Church Extension and Missionary Society.** In 1887 the Church Extension and Missionary Society was organized, the outgrowth of a growing missionary movement that was first mentioned in the minutes of the 1840 Annual Conference. That organization has made possible a rapid expansion of church building

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1882, p. 17.



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and mission work from the very date of its beginning. The organization and work of this society has also been well discussed in Fulton's History.

**Mutual Beneficial Association.** The Mutual Beneficial Association of Allegheny Conference was formulated in 1887 and a Constitution adopted. In brief it agreed to pay the sum of \$200 to the widow or legal heirs of a member within 60 days of the announcement of his death. No member of the Conference over 45 years of age was eligible to membership. The entrance fee was \$5, with an annual due of \$2 to the association. On notification of the death of a member, the remaining members of the Association were immediately assessed \$10. While some changes have been made from time to time, the organization is essentially the same today. It has served a noble purpose in caring for the families of the ministry in the time of the loss of the pastor and father of the home. In 1900, the Association was opened to the wives of the ministers, and the mortality assessment was decreased to \$2.

Three other outstanding events in the history of the Conference will now be more fully discussed in closing the study of that period.

The first discussion concerns a vital change in the evangelistic policies of the Conference.

### Change in Evangelistic Methods

From the very earliest time of the organization of the Allegheny Conference it has been noticed that the Presiding Elder was the evangelist of the district. True every pastor was his own evangelist, but he was always assisted by the leadership of the Presiding Elder. It had been the custom of the Presiding Elder to appoint a Quarterly Conference meeting, and then at that time hold a week of services, during which he would receive his salary for the quarter, discuss the

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program of the church, and conduct a week of evangelistic services. After he had left the appointment, the pastor in charge would continue the campaign, often assisted by the local ministers of the church.

**The First Evangelistic Party.** During the Conference year of 1887-1888, however, a dramatic change took place in the Conference evangelistic program. An evangelistic party was brought into the Conference and held services in practically all of the larger churches of the Conference. They were well received and were blessed with a multitude of conversions. The party was composed of Rev. and Mrs. R. J. Parrett, and their daughters Maude and Lena. A description of the party is found in the **Religious Telescope**, and reads as follows:

Miss Maude plays the organ with ease and grace. Miss Lena, not more than eight years of age, sings soprano to some of the songs. Brother Parrett has a strong bass voice and generally sings with the family. Mrs. Parrett has a strong and clear voice well fitted to lead the congregation. <sup>1</sup>

This strong evangelistic party swept the Conference by storm and set the policy of mass evangelism through professional evangelists for many years to come.

Dr. Lawrence Keister, who was a pastor in the Conference at the time of their work, tells many interesting incidents concerning the family. Rev. Parrett had been a Union soldier in the Civil War, and was considered an expert swordsman. At one time one of his superior officers had insisted on a practice duel to sharpen their swordmanship. In the ensuing match, Rev. Parrett cut the hat of his opponent from his head, leaving the rim to fall forward on the discomfited officer's head.

1. **Religious Telescope**, January 18, 1888.

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All the members of the family were outstanding musicians. While in Tyrone the younger daughter was singing very beautifully, and in the midst of the song, one of the membership picked her up and held her high so that all could see her as she continued her solo. With no interruption she continued her song, held in the affectionate embrace of the emotional churchman.

### Young People's Work

The second outstanding event of this closing period is that of the organization of the Young People's work of the Conference.

In 1878, three years before the organization of the first Christian Endeavor Society by Francis E. Clark at Portland, Maine, Rev. Martin Spangler, pastor of the Altoona First Church of the United Brethren in Christ, organized a youth group. He realized the power of consecrated youth, and called the young people of the church together and organized them into a Young People's Christian Association, thus forming the first society of young people in the Conference. The object of this society was "the training of youth in prayer and Christian work." <sup>1</sup>

The first president of this organization was Mr. Harry Bottenberg, and the first vice president was Miss Kate Schum, exemplary and devoted leaders, both of blessed memory. The association continued until, in 1888, it adopted the Christian Endeavor Constitution and name. <sup>2</sup>

At the time of this organization, Rev. Martin Spangler was 40 years of age, and an outstanding leader in the work of the Conference. In 1880 he was

1. Funk, Mary Gardiner, **A History of the First Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Altoona, Pennsylvania**, pp. 28-29.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.



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elected to the Presiding Eldership, and in 1881, on October the first, he died during the meeting of the Conference in the city of Altoona. Rev. Spangler had made Altoona his home after his election to the leadership of the Eastern District of the Conference, and sent his report to the session to be read. The entire town and Conference were shocked at his untimely death.

Dr. J. S. Fulton, in his **History of the Allegheny Conference**, says, "The distinction of having organized the first Christian Endeavor Society in the United Brethren Church is claimed by Allegheny Conference. In March, 1883, a Christian Endeavor Society was organized at Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, by the pastor, Rev. L. R. Jones." This organization followed the first organized Christian Endeavor Society which was sponsored by Francis Clark of the Congregational Church by two years. It was, however, five years later than the comparable Young People's Christian Association formed in the Altoona Church.

At the Pringledale Camp meeting in 1887, the first Conference organization was effected, and in 1888 the Constitution was adopted. The following **Religious Telescope** account of the organization was sent in by its secretary, H. F. Shupe. Rev. Henry F. Shupe, for many years editor of the **Watchward**, was born near Scottdale, Pennsylvania, March 18, 1860. He was affectionately known all over the denomination as 'Uncle Harry.' At the time of this communication, he was in the third year of his ministry, having entered pastoral work in 1885. The communication follows:

The Christian growth of the young people of our churches is a matter of the greatest importance; and with this conviction the young people of Allegheny Conference who were in attendance at Pringledale Camp-



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meeting have organized a Young People's Christian Association, the object of which is to bring into closer relation the various young people's Christian Societies within the Conference and to encourage further organization. At the Pringledale Camp-meeting in 1887, the organization was effected and a committee appointed to draft a constitution, and another committee to secure funds and build a chapel on the camp grounds for the meetings of the young people. At the camp meeting of the present year, the constitution was adopted which regulates the meetings to be held annually on the camp grounds, and provides for organizers whose duty it is to look out for places where the young people of the churches are not organized, and give them what assistance they can in organizing them. There are already a number of these societies, and they are proving a great blessing to the churches. The association recommends for new societies the model constitution of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, with a condition that no society shall adopt any rules or practices contrary to the discipline and usages of the United Brethren Church. Through the efforts of the building committee a substantial and commodious chapel was built at Pringledale Camp, Wilmore, Pa., at a cost of about \$230.00. <sup>1</sup>

As it related to the Conference, a committee reported to the 1888 Conference on a proposed constitution. This report was sent back to the committee, and in 1889 the following report on the Young People's Christian Association was adopted:

1. Religious Telescope, August 22, 1888.

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Your committee of the constitution for a local Young People's Christian Association would recommend to all local societies the model constitution of the Y.P.S.C.E., with such modification as may be necessary to adapt it to the local needs of the Church, with the provision that no rule of the society shall in any way conflict with the discipline and usages of the United Brethren Church.<sup>1</sup>

This report was signed by J. N. Munden, H. F. Shupe, and L. W. Stahl.

The first anniversary of the Young People's Association was held on Wednesday evening, September 18, 1889, on the opening day of the Conference in session. H. F. Shupe, Secretary of the Association, delivered the first address on the "Principles and Permanency of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor." This was followed by an address by J. N. Munden, President of the Association, on the "Objects and Departments of the Society of Christian Endeavor."<sup>2</sup>

When the denominational organization was formulated in 1890, the Conference immediately associated itself with the Church program.

Since this early day of organization the Christian Endeavor movement has spread throughout the Conference until today it is one of the strong arms of the Church. It has become departmentally organized with the result that there are 57 Junior, 38 Intermediate, 112 Senior, and 21 Adult Christian Endeavor societies in Allegheny Conference at this present time.

### First Johnstown Flood

The third outstanding event worthy of our attention during the closing days of that period was the

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1889, p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

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great flood that swept through the town of Johnstown in 1889. It was just a month after the close of the General Conference of 1889 that the torrent of waters descended upon the valley city of Johnstown. One of the earliest accounts of the flood was that which was written by C. I. B. Brane to the office of the **Religious Telescope**. It read thus:

..... The United Brethren Church at Johnstown has suffered greatly. It will take hundreds of dollars to repair the loss to the church. And then the excellent parsonage is washed completely away, and with it all the furnishings and effects of the good pastor Rev. W. H. Mingle, who was fortunately absent with his family when the flood occurred. Brother Thomas, a prominent member of our church.... also lost heavily, \$150,000 according to the account I saw. I am sorry to say that the loss sustained by our church in Johnstown includes many of our people who were swept away by families, from their homes on earth to their Father's house on high. Dr. George Waggoner and family were among the number. Brother George M. Valentine and family, ten in all, who recently went from Hagerstown to Johnstown were drowned.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. George Waggoner, whose name occurs in the above account was the son of a local minister, previously mentioned. He became one of the more prominent leaders of the Church, and had presented a history of the past 50 years of Allegheny Conference to the fall Conference of 1888. At one time he had been a Presiding Elder of the Conference, but by the time of his death he had located as a dentist in the city of Johns-

1. **Religious Telescope**, June 19, 1889.

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town. He still served the small mission church of Stoney Creek in addition to his dental work when the flood occurred.

Further reports from the flood area revealed that over 50 members of the Johnstown Church of the United Brethren in Christ had lost their lives in the flood, and that the property loss would exceed \$6,000. The pastor of the church, W. H. Mingle, asked for immediate aid for the church, stating that the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches were rallying to their stricken brethren and had already received help. As a result of these appeals, a total of nearly \$2,000 was raised to aid the stricken church. At that time the **Religious Telescope** issued an offer of a paper weight of marble to those who would give \$2 or more to the Johnstown Relief Fund. Those who would give \$5 or more would have inscribed on their paper weight, the words "Johnstown 1889."

On the sixth of August, Rev. M. R. Drury represented the office of the **Religious Telescope** in making the first presentation of the monies raised for flood relief. After considering all claims, the following allocations were made:

Rev. W. H. Mingle, Pastor at Johnstown	\$61.00
Rev. J. H. Pershing, Pastor at Conemaugh	7.00
Individual relief by action of the Ladies	
Aid Society of Greensburg	60.00
To repair Johnstown Church	1202.74
	<hr/>
	\$1330.74

At that time Rev. W. H. Mingle reported that for the past 6 weeks he had received only \$36 to carry on his work in caring for the flood stricken families, and in the reconstruction of the church. He mentioned it, not as a plea for more money, but as an explanation as



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to why he had been so limited in being able to cope with the many problems that the church was meeting. He felt very keenly his limitations in not being able to get around among the needy as much as he wished to. The check traveling the greatest distance for the relief of the Johnstown Church came from Woodbridge, California. It was a Wells Fargo money order for \$16.26.

While not as seriously affected as the Johnstown Church, the Conemaugh Church suffered a severe loss inasmuch as the homes of 29 of its members were destroyed. The loss to the church building was about \$300.

The Conference of 1889 resolved to raise \$600 under the leadership of the Presiding Elders. This money was to be used to assist the Johnstown First Church to build a new parsonage. The report of the committee on resolutions closed with these words:

Resolved that we express our gratitude to the brethren at a distance for the relief already extended to our afflicted brethren at Johnstown, and ask the Church at large to contribute more generally for the relief of both the churches at Johnstown and Conemaugh. <sup>1</sup>

As we look ahead to the second Johnstown flood, which occurred on March 15, 1936, we note that the great difference was in that of the loss of life. While hundreds of lives were lost during the first inundation, there was no loss of life connected with the second from the direct cause of the flood.

Again in the second flood the pastor, Dr. C. W. Winey, was out of town, but his wife was caught in the parsonage, and was forced to the second floor as the waters raged to a height of over six feet above the level of the first floor. The second flood was of even

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1889, p. 29.

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greater proportions, but the buildings, being more substantial, withstood the waters, and Mrs. Winey lived through the tortuous ordeal.

The first contribution from any church to the Johnstown congregation following the second flood, came from the Mt. Olive and East Connellsville Churches, where the writer was located at that time as the pastor. The check was for \$25.

We close this chapter with a rather interesting statement from the **Religious Telescope**, in the June fifteenth issue for the year 1887. In this issue it was stated that Children's Day was set as the first Sunday in June in commemoration of the birthday of Philip William Otterbein, who was born on the third of June. Thus through coincidence this date paralleled the internationally observed Children's Day, which we continue to use.

## CHAPTER VI

### PERIOD OF ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE,

1889-1907

No matter how one may divide the growth and development of any organization into periods of time, there will always be certain overlappings. Such is the case of this period, which has been labeled a period of administrative change. For many years prior to the General Conference there had been agitation for two major changes in the Constitution and Discipline of the Church. The first of these has been well considered in the closing pages of the preceding chapter, namely, the question of membership in secret organizations. The second issue was that of lay representation.

#### Lay Representation

As early as 1877 the General Conference considered the subject of lay representation. Provision was then made for the receiving of lay delegates into the Annual Conference on a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Conference. This statement, however, does not seem to have had any effect upon the thinking of Allegheny Conference, for there is no record in the minutes of lay representation.

At the 1885 Annual Conference there is the first mention of lay representation. The report of the Committee on Lay Delegation was as follows:

We, your Committee on Lay Delegation, to whom certain actions of the Conference were referred, report as follows:

1. That the third quarterly meeting of the Conference year two persons of the laity be put in nomination to be voted for by the various congregations of the charges as delegates to the ensuing Annual Conference.

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2. That the pastor of the charge shall hold the election or elections for delegates, by congregation between the third and fourth Quarterly Conferences.

3. That the pastor shall report the result to the fourth Quarterly Conference, which Quarterly Conference shall issue the certificate of election.

4. None but regularly recognized members of the Church shall have the privilege of voting.

5. In the event that the person receiving the highest number of votes should be prevented, by any cause, from attending the Annual Conference, then the next highest shall be entitled to the seat.<sup>1</sup>

That the decision of the Conference to take advantage of the permission to elect lay delegates was appreciated by the laymen was evidenced by the report in the 1886 Conference minutes, in which the list of lay delegates was presented. Because this first group of lay delegates to our Annual Conference is of great interest to many of our laity, it is here presented:

### List of Lay Delegates

Altoona District.- Altoona, H. Schum; Clearfield, W. H. Shirey; Calvin, W. H. Smity; Bellefonte, W. H. Dale; Port Matilda, D. Buck; East Salem, @ H. Eherenzeller; Tyrone Mission, H. W. Myers; Millheim, @ A. R. Alexander; Julian - - - -; Three Springs, @ H. Kelley; Bigler, A. C. Lansberg; Philipsburg Mission -----; Liverpool, @ E. W. Snyder; Huntingdon @ E. Robley; Juniata, W. A. Conn; Tuscarora, John Brigs.

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1885, p. 37.



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Johnstown District, - Johnstown, John Thomas; Morellville Mission, @ C. L. Miller; Indiana, E. Grumbling; Medera, ----! Ligonier, R. Pringle; Rockwood, E. D. Miller; Hollidaysburg, J. Aurandt; Fallen Timber, Thomas Flick; Conemaugh, A. Pringle; Newburg, G. Toezer; Cambria, H. R. Shaeffer; Somerset, W. H. Baldwin; New Paris, J. Tritz.

Greensburg District.— Greensburg, S. K. Ebersole; Mt. Pleasant, S. Zuck; Braddock, W. M. Mench; Westmoreland, S. Keister; Madison, I. W. Hoenshell; Washington, B. C. Stout; Mahoning, M. C. Rhodes; Industry, W. F. Todd; Allegheny, William Brown; Cooksburg, @ S. Barnett; Pittsburgh Mission, Joseph Long; Connellsville, R. Herbert; Springfield, T. W. Dull.<sup>1</sup>

@ Absent

The General Conference made lay representation in the Annual Conference mandatory instead of optional at the 1889 Convention. From that time on the delegates of the Allegheny Conference were elected by Discipline rather than by the recommendation of the Conference.

In 1912 the Laymen adopted a constitution and organized, electing Dr. A. E. Roose to the office of president; David Strickler, secretary; and H. U. Leyman, treasurer.<sup>2</sup>

Lay representation to the General Conference first became an accepted fact by action of the 1889 Convention. It was decided then that the following ratio would be used:

Conferences having less than three thousand members----two ministers and one layman.

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1886, p. 41.

2. Fulton, J. S., *History of the Allegheny Conference*, p. 54.

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Conferences having from three thousand to sixty five hundred---three ministers and one laymán.

Conferences having over sixty five hundred members--- four ministers and two laymen.

The General Conference of 1901 gave equal representation to laity and ministry alike. There was little opposition to the move. Allegheny Conference ministers voted solidly for the change to equality of representation, but strangely enough the two lay delegates, John Thomas and John Ruth were absent and therefore did not vote.

### **The Presiding Eldership**

We have already noticed the change in the evangelistic program that had taken place with the coming of a professional evangelist into the Conference. With such a change in the evangelistic approach, there was naturally a change in the interpretation of the duties pertaining to the office of Presiding Elder. Where before he had been the evangelist of his district, now he found that work taken over in part by professional parties who were employed from time to time by the local churches. As a result, the duties of the Presiding Elder became more and more those of a superintendent who supervised the program of his district. Where in the early days of the church, it had been necessary for the Presiding Elder to come and unite the people in the holding of the Lord's Supper, in this later day of one to five church appointments, it became increasingly evident that the pastor, as the shepherd of his flock, was better able to administer the sacrament. The pastor, now located in the community of his people, was equipped through personal leadership, and through association, to lead his people in

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communion with their Lord in a more personal way than could his superior, the Presiding Elder.

For many years the Conference had been divided into three districts, Altoona, Johnstown, and Greensburg. At the time of the meeting of the 1898 Conference in Altoona, the three Presiding Elders were: T. P. Orner, J. H. Pershing, and L. W. Stahl. During the session of Conference the following recommendation from the lay members was read: "We humbly ask the Annual Conference to reduce the number of Presiding Elder Districts from three to two Districts."<sup>1</sup> This motion was later amended to make it mandatory, and was then adopted.

Under the new organization of the Conference there were two districts known by common consent as the East and the West Districts of Allegheny Conference. G. W. Sherrick and L. W. Stahl were the newly elected Presiding Elders. This setup lasted until 1907 when the present plan of the Conference Superintendency was adopted.

Rev. J. I. L. Ressler, son of Dr. J. B. Ressler, was the Presiding Elder of the Western District at the time of the 1907 Conference, and G. W. Sherrick was the Presiding Elder of the Eastern District. The changing of conditions within the Conference was recognized by both of these men and by the leadership of the Conference. J. I. L. Ressler had shown cognizance of these varying and changing responsibilities in an attempt to meet the conditions of his district by redefining the work of a Presiding Elder.

He sent out notification through the Conference paper and through the **Religious Telescope** that he was introducing a new feature in his District. He omitted the holding of the second Quarterly Conference (January, February and March) and used it to carry

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1898, p. 14.



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on evangelistic work on the weaker charges. In this work he presented the Gospel in sermon and song. Meetings were held at Youngwood, Faucett Avenue, McKeesport and Beaver Falls. At the time of his writing he was about to continue his work with meetings at Somerset and Windber.<sup>1</sup> While this was in a sense a return to the old concept of an evangelistic Presiding Elder, it was different inasmuch as it did not combine the thought of evangelism with the Quarterly Conference and the Communion Service. It is interesting to note that in the final report, defining the duties of the Superintendent of the Conference as presented for his guidance, this interpretation of the office of Superintendent was incorporated.

When the report of the Boundary Committee was read at the 1907 Conference, it closed with the following recommendation: "That there be one Presiding Elder District."<sup>2</sup> This item caused considerable discussion, but it was finally agreed that there would be "but one District or Conference Superintendency."<sup>3</sup>

### **The Superintendency**

The election of the Conference Superintendent was then held and on the third ballot, Dr. James Spenser Fulton received a majority of the votes cast and was declared the first Conference Superintendent of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The salary was fixed at \$1800 a year, and on the following year was raised to \$2000. The Presiding Elders had received \$1500 a year under the old plan of supervision.<sup>5</sup> On motion, a Committee of five was then appointed to define a plan for the superintendence

1. *Religious Telescope*, February 13, 1907.

2. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1907, p. 58.

3. *Ibid.*, 1907, p. 36.

4. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1907, p. 36.

5. *Ibid.*, 1906, p. 24.



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of the Conference.<sup>1</sup> This Committee brought in the following report:

Your Committee to define the duties of Conference Superintendent would report as follows:

**Resolved 1.** That the Superintendent be asked to visit as rapidly as possible every charge in the Conference at the beginning of the Conference year, to help to arrange all financial matters and business transactions pertaining to each local charge.

**Resolved 2.** That the Superintendent be excused during the second and third quarters from holding the quarterly conference, and from all routine work and devote his energies to the helping of weaker charges, the general interests of the church evangelism, and the opening up of new work.

**Resolved 3.** That the Superintendent arrange to hold the fourth quarterly conference on every charge in the Conference to close up all the business in the proper way.

**Resolved 4.** That every pastor be required to send to the Conference Superintendent a report for the second and third quarters of the Conference year. The reports to be indorsed by the official board or class leaders of the charge.<sup>2</sup>

A year later in making his first report to the Annual Conference, Dr. J. S. Fulton was able to say concerning the new plan of Conference Supervision:

I am happy to record that not a single complaint of the system of superintendency has come to me during the year, while the

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1907, p. 36.

2. *Ibid.*, 1907, p. 78.

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commendations have been many, and the pulse of the Conference seems to indicate entire satisfaction with the plan. . . . . This year has been an exceedingly busy one, the travel of this Conference averaging about 1,000 miles each month. About an average of twenty-four hours each week I have spent at home. I have preached 170 sermons, visited nearly all of the missions three times, spent most of my Sabbaths on the weaker fields, and given all of my time and energy to the work.

We pray that the blessing of God may continue with us as a Conference. Respectfully submitted,

J. S. Fulton. <sup>1</sup>

It was unfortunate that one of our greatest national depressions occurred during this first year of the change of our system of supervision. Nevertheless the Superintendent was able to say that 48 charges had raised their salaries, in the course of the year and that the grand total of monies paid into the various treasuries was in excess of that of the preceding year. There was also an increase in membership of 206. <sup>2</sup>

### Single Budget System

Another very important administrative change that occurred in the Conference organization was the adoption of a Conference budget. From the very early days of Conference organization special offerings were taken for every special interest of the Church. In 1839, at the first Conference session, this seemed the natural thing to do, for there were very few special offerings. But with the passing of the years new organizations came into existence, bringing with them added finan-

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1908, pp. 53-59.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

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cial obligations. These appeals became so numerous that at the Conference of 1906 the Committee on Boundary and Finance brought in the following report:

Believing that the plan of the Finance Committee, approved by the Conference in the past, is unsatisfactory and unbusinesslike, this paper suggests the following: ..

Instead of assessing each charge so much for the various interests separately, as in the past, let the following interest, presiding elder's salary, Bishop, Home Missions (General), Home Missions (Conference Contingent), Church Erection, Preachers' Aid, Otterbein University, Union Biblical Seminary, Beneficiary Education, Sabbath-School General Fund, Publication, Otterbein Trustees, constitute what shall be known as the Conference Assessment Budget, and assessed to each field. The total budget for the Conference shall be \$15,100....<sup>1</sup>

Arrangements were made for the election of a Conference Budget Treasurer, whose salary was to be \$100 a year. The unification of the various church interests in one budget did much to unite the Church in its giving, and has proved a blessing time and again as more and more diversified claims have been assumed by the Conference Budget.

### **Time Restrictions for Pastoral Appointments**

For many years there had been a limit placed on the number of years a man may serve a pastorate. In the early days of the Conference, two years were considered the longest time one man should serve one charge. Later the limit was placed at three years. While there were those within the Conference who

.1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1906, p. 23.



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felt that this restriction was unwise, it was strictly adhered to as a matter of Conference policy. As early as 1855, W. M. McKee, then pastor of the Allegheny Mission (later Pittsburgh Mission) stated that "matters are in a tolerable good condition. . . . but I have no hope that a church can be built up in a popular city by changing ministers every year or every two years."<sup>1</sup> The policy of the Church remained fixed, however, and ministers were continually moved in the midst of very fruitful pastorates.

Dr. W. G. Fulton recalls a very unusual and interesting situation that arose during the famous "Short Conference" of 1880. During the year 1880 it was decided that the Conference session would be changed from January to September. The Conference session had been appointed late that year and was opened on the eighth of February, in the town of Greensburg. During the month of September of the same year, a second session was held at the Pringledale Camp ground. Rev. A. E. Fulton, father of Dr. W. G. Fulton and Dr. J. S. Fulton, was assigned to Hollidaysburg for the third year at the February Conference. Both the charge and the pastor felt that the appointment should be carried over the "Short Conference" session. The question came up before the stationing committee, and they ruled that the short term had constituted a Conference year, and the pastor must be moved. Rev. A. E. Fulton was then moved to Cambria Charge.

The weakness of such a system was so evident that at the 1893 General Conference the limitation was swept away.<sup>2</sup> In 1895 Dr. S. S. Hough began the first Allegheny Conference long pastorate while assigned to the Altoona 2nd Church. He was located there until assuming demoninational work in 1905. Since that time

1. *Religious Telescope*, January 21, 1855.

2. Berger Daniel, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 400, Dayton, Ohio: Otterbein Publishing House (1897).



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the length of pastorates has continued to increase. Rev. T. W. Burgess started another list of long time pastorates with a period of thirteen years. (1924-1937) at the Herminie Church. Dr. W. A. Sites was the pastor of the Bradenville Church for fifteen years (1925-1940). Two men are today serving the fifteenth year of continued service on one pastorate, namely, Rev. M. S. Bitner, pastor of the Altoona Otterbein Church and Rev. E. A. Shultz, pastor of the Connells-ville Church.

This period of administrative change resulted in a very rapid growth and development in the Conference. The changing of the law on secrecy did much to facilitate progress. Better methods of transportation also played their part in the progress of the Conference. In 1889 there were 9,300 members in the Conference, and 128 church buildings;<sup>1</sup> by 1907, these had increased to 18,475 members, and 226 buildings.<sup>2</sup>

### Conference Leaders

This period of Conference history also provided its share of outstanding leaders to the denomination. In addition to those whose work carried over from the preceding period, these following men gave their contribution to the denominational Church: H. F. Shupe, Editor of the **Watchward**, 1893-1926; J. R. King, Missionary to Africa, 1894-1912, Superintendent of Otterbein Home, 1912-1926, Field Representative of Otterbein College and Supervisor of King Hall Dormitory, 1926-1938; Lawrence Keister, President, Lebanon Valley College, 1907-1912; E. U. Hoenshel, Principal of Shenandoah Institute, 1896-1909; J. T. Spangler, Professor of Greek at Lebanon Valley Col-

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1890, p. 49.

2. *Ibid.*, 1907, p. 21.

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lege, 1901-1910; L. F. John, Professor of Ethics and English Bible at Lebanon Valley College, 1901-1908; Donald J. Cowling, Professor at Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas, 1906-1909, President Carlton College, 1909 to the present date; W. R. Funk, United Brethren Publishing Agent, 1897-1933; and S. S. Hough, General Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1905-1919, Executive Secretary of the Board of Administration, 1919-1937; emeritus Secretary, 1937 to date.

### **Dr. H. F. Shupe**

Dr. H. F. Shupe was known throughout the denomination as "Uncle Harry." He was born near Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, and after completing his education at Union Biblical Seminary (now Bonebrake Theological Seminary), entered the ministry of Allegheny Conference in 1885.<sup>1</sup> In 1893 it was decided to issue a denominational paper for young people, and the Church immediately turned to Dr. Shupe, who had been actively engaged in young people's work in his own Conference. From the time of his election in 1893, he served until the date of his unexpected death on October the thirteenth, 1926. He had been in office for a period of thirty three and one-third years.<sup>2</sup>

### **Dr. J. R. King**

Dr. J. R. King was well known to all leaders of denominational work. In 1894, he and Mrs. King, together with Dr. and Mrs. A. T. Howard, were added to the workers already carrying on the work at the African Mission field in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Africa. During the African uprising of 1898, both he and his wife were in America on furlough, thus escaping the massacre that occurred. In 1912 Dr. and Mrs.

1. Drury, A. W., *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 574.
2. *The Church Annual*, 1939, p. 63.

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King came back to America where he assumed the superintendency of the Otterbein Home. This institution had just been purchased from the Shakers, who for many years had conducted a farm of 4,005 acres on the land. The Shakers were strict believers in celibacy, and as a result their numbers rapidly decreased until only 26 were left to carry on this cooperative farming movement, and it was with this small group of very upright men that the purchase was consummated at a cost of \$325,000. For 14 years Dr. King held this Church relationship of Superintendent of Otterbein Home. Then desiring to assume lighter responsibilities during the later years of his life, he contributed generously to the building of a boy's dormitory on the Otterbein College Campus. This building became known as King Hall, and for many years Dr. and Mrs. King resided there as supervisors. During this same period of time, Dr. King visited the various cooperating conferences as field representative of the College. This dual relationship he continued to hold with Otterbein College until his death on the twenty-third of January, 1938.

### **Dr. Lawrence Keister**

Dr. Lawrence Keister, the son of Solomon Keister, was born near Scottdale on the twenty-eighth of Aug., 1856. He graduated from Otterbein College in 1882, and from Boston University Theological School in 1885. After several successful pastorates in the leading churches of the Conference, Dr. Keister was elected to the presidency of Lebanon Valley College in 1907. After serving in this capacity for five years, Dr. Keister retired in a spacious home that he had prepared in Scottdale. Here he devoted his leisure time to writing and to benevolent enterprises.

It was the privilege of the writer to study Greek with Dr. Keister during the fall and winter of 1937-38.



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Dr. Keister, then 82 years of age, proved to be a keen student of Greek, and alert to all the work and problems of the present Church. Before the fireplace of the living room of his home, the writer noticed the inscription DUN MOVIN. His curiosity was so aroused that on one occasion he asked Dr. Keister what it meant. With his friendly laugh the good doctor said, "When Mrs. Keister and I came to Scottdale, we decided that this would be our home for the remainder of our days. We had moved so many times in the pastorate, and then to Lebanon Valley College, and back again here, that we decided to make this our last move. So that inscription in the mantle place, means just what it says, 'Dun Movin,' and we have kept it very literally."

Among the books that Dr. Keister has written are, **In Memorium**, **The Inner Witness of the Fourth Gospel**, and **The Shining Pathway**. In addition to these books he has written numerous pamphlets and addresses which are in printed form. Among his recent unprinted writings is his **A Spiritual History of Allegheny Conference**. In it his spiritual personality is revealed through his opening words, which follow:

The spiritual History of Allegheny Conference was written not by human hand, but by the spirit of God. The original record was made in the lives of ministers and laymen who form the unbroken procession that has pressed onward for one hundred years... The history of Allegheny Conference for almost one hundred years confirms the truth stated by Paul in his letter to the Romans, 'The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.' every one in the home land, and every one in the foreign field.... For the sake of his own salvation



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every man must have 'an interview with the Almighty,' a convention with Him who sees and knows all things, a continual conference with Him who lives and reigns in the heart, and who sets before the believer a door opened which no man can shut.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Keister is still active about his home, and an active participant in the attendance of the services of the church. On August the twenty-eighth, 1943, he reached his eighty-seventh birthday.

### **Dr. William Ross Funk**

Dr. William Ross Funk was born near West Newton, Pennsylvania, and became a member of the Sewickley United Brethren Church at the age of eleven. The community was also known by the name of Funks, and at various times the church was also known as Funks Church. This is a fitting testimonial to the United Brethren background that W. R. Funk inherited. His school work was taken at Otterbein College and Union Biblical (now Bonebrake Theological) Seminary. He was made a member of the Allegheny Conference in 1883 and continued in pastoral work until called to the office of Publishing House agent at the 1897 General Conference.

Dr. W. R. Funk was a man filled with enthusiasm for progress, and had a way of convincing others that nothing was impossible of attainment. As a result, the Publishing interests entered into a period of expansion that brought into existence two million dollars worth of new buildings, financed by the Publishing house interests. Chief among these buildings was the famous United Brethren Building, which cost \$1,487,499.37.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the expansion proved unwise financially due to the unprecedented depression of 1931. After

1. Keister, Lawrence, **A Spiritual History of Allegheny Conference.** p. 1.

2. Fulton, J. S., **History of the Allegheny Conference,** p. 72.

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many disastrous years, the Publishing House projects have finally begun to show a profit, and it may well be that in future years the Church will realize a blessing from what has been a heavy financial burden during the past decade. It is unfortunate in many ways that Dr. Funk was not privileged to see the day when the hopes and dreams of a lifetime would be climaxed with these great Church interests free from debt. During his time in office he was able to realize a deep joy in knowing that the assets of the institution had increased from approximately \$400,000 to more than \$3,000,000 under his leadership.

At the 1933 General Conference, Dr. Funk requested a retired relationship with the church, stating that he and his wife had looked forward eagerly to spending the last years of their lives quietly together. Unfortunately, tragedy overtook this courageous couple. A serious automobile wreck took the life of Mrs. Funk and seriously injured Dr. Funk.

Upon his recovery, Dr. Funk decided to spend his remaining years at the Otterbein Home, which institution he had established with the cooperation of his co-worker, Dr. J. M. Phillippi. It was while he was located at this Home, which had been the vision of his early years, that he died on the third of November, 1935.<sup>1</sup>

### **Dr. Samuel S. Hough**

Dr. Samuel Strickler Hough was another leader in denominational activities during this era. He was born near Scottdale, Pennsylvania, on the fourth of October, 1864. He trained to assume leadership in the field of teaching, and for two years served as principal of the East Brady Schools.<sup>2</sup> Then feeling called to the ministry as a field for life service, Dr. Hough entered Bonebrake Theological Seminary, graduating from that

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1936, p. 57.

2. Fulton, J. S., *History of the Allegheny Conference*, p. 72.

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institution in 1862. Following a successful ten year pastorate at the Altoona Second Avenue Church, Dr. Hough was called by the General Conference of 1905 to the position of General Secretary of Foreign Missions. In 1918 he was elected Executive Secretary to the Board of Administration, and held that relationship with the Church until the time of his retirement in 1937.<sup>1</sup> From the time of his retirement to this date, Dr. Hough has given himself extensively to the field of research. His **Biography of Christian Newcomer**, a study of life and achievements of that great United Brethren pioneer, as revealed through the Journal that Newcomer kept, is a book of denominational fame and interdenominational interest. It has given much information concerning the Mennonite Church, the Church of God, and the Evangelical Church through the mentioning of the homes and families with which Rev. Newcomer came into contact.

The research interest of Dr. Hough remains keen, as he constantly writes to the various men of the Conference concerning the historical background of our Conference and our denominational Church. Among the writings of Dr. Hough are listed, **Our Church Abroad**, **Continuing the Fellowship**, **Partners in the Conquering Cause** (written in cooperation with Dr. H. F. Shupe), and his stewardship leaflets, **Money and the Gospel** and **Life Complete through Stewardship** are well known.

Conference ministers of renown during this period included L. W. Stahl, who will be considered with a later period, and J. H. Pershing.

### Dr. J. H. Pershing

Rev. Justus H. Pershing, D. D., D. Psy., was born on a farm in Derry Township, the youngest child in a

1. **Allegheny Conference Minutes**, 1941, p. 17.



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family of 14 children, who were born to Isaac and Frances Pershing. The family traces its American origin to the year 1749, when a colony of French Huguenots, including the Pershings, settled in Westmoreland County.

Rev. Pershing was born on the 12th of June, 1847. Due to his participation in the Civil War he did not conclude his college education until he had reached the age of 27. He had entered the ranks of his country's defenders at the age of 15, and served until the conclusion of the War. In 1900 he received the degree of Doctor of Psychology from the Chicago School of Psychology. Dr. Pershing became a member of Allegheny Conference in 1878, and served in her active ministry for more than fifty years, 3 of these years being spent in the Presiding Eldership. Many of the later years of his ministry were spent in the Greensburg Church of the United Brethren in Christ as the associate Pastor.<sup>1</sup>

In 1921, Dr. Pershing published a booklet entitled, **Reminiscences of an Itinerant Preacher**. Because of the historic worth of some of the passages they are reproduced in the quotations that follow:

The foregoing pages refer to the more arduous labors of my early ministry on the large charges of that day as compared with my station work later in life. Station work is what fractions are to whole numbers compared with work on a large circuit. I have tried both, having served six circuits and six stations.<sup>2</sup>

At the St. John Church, near Somerset, I immersed eight persons in Kantner's Mill Race after cutting two layers of ice. The race had frozen over, then a rain raised the water over that first layer and a second freeze made a second layer. I never

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1931, pp. 65 - 67.

2. Pershing, Justus H., *Reminiscences of an Itinerant Preacher*, p. 11.



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caught cold from baptizing by immersion. That was not as dangerous as sleeping in cold, unused, spare beds.<sup>1</sup>

I have slept in all kinds of beds in all kinds of weather. One night it would be on feathers, the next night on straw, the next night on slats, and then back to feathers the night following. I have wept with those that weep and laughed with those that laugh, having a funeral and a wedding both on the same day.<sup>2</sup>

I held the first children's meeting in Allegheny Conference using a blackboard and colored crayon. I say it cautiously and very kindly that a few of the older members thought that my 'new fangled' teaching was an innovation. I organized the first catechetical class, was the first Conference Sunday School secretary and treasurer, first Conference secretary of the historical society of our denomination, and published the first pictorial and historical chart of the early history of our Church.<sup>3</sup>

While pastor at Wilmore a second term by the Annual Conference assignment, I erected and dedicated the first young people's chapel, not only the first in our denomination; but the first in America, being two years before the much noted Clark Chapel in Massachusetts.<sup>4</sup>

In 1877, while pastor on the Mahoning charge I received what was said to be the largest donation in the history of Allegheny Conference. The list of contributions and articles received has been carefully treasured by my precious wife, and are as follows: house rent, buggy, saddle, bridle and halter, Prince Albert suit, underwear, hat and

1. Pershing, Justus H., *Op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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shoes, two out-fits of clothing, Sunday and week-day, for wife and three children, load hay, corn and oats, two barrels flour, four pork shoulders and eight hams, tub sausage, large hind quarter of beef, and groceries, total three hundred and eighteen dollars.<sup>1</sup>

At a certain place on several occasions, there was a certain loud professing class leader, now dead and I hope in heaven, with whom as occasion called forth I would stop with over night. Instead of feeding my horse as a Christian official of the church was believed to do, he would daub the trough and the nose of my horse with the chop paddle. I made the discovery from the fact when traveling on some of those long distances the horse would become so fatigued and weak that he laid down in the middle of the road for lack of strength to go any further. In conjunction with another ministerial brother I set a trap for him and caught him body and soul in the trap.<sup>2</sup>

These foregoing paragraphs give a vision of the work of the minister in the later part of the nineteenth century as well as a picture of the dynamic life of this aggressive pastor of the Allegheny Conference.

Dr. Pershing died on Saturday, May twenty-third, 1931 at the advanced age of 84 years. Following the funeral service on May twenty-fifth, his body was interred in the Saint Clair Cemetery in Greensburg, Pa.

### Laymen

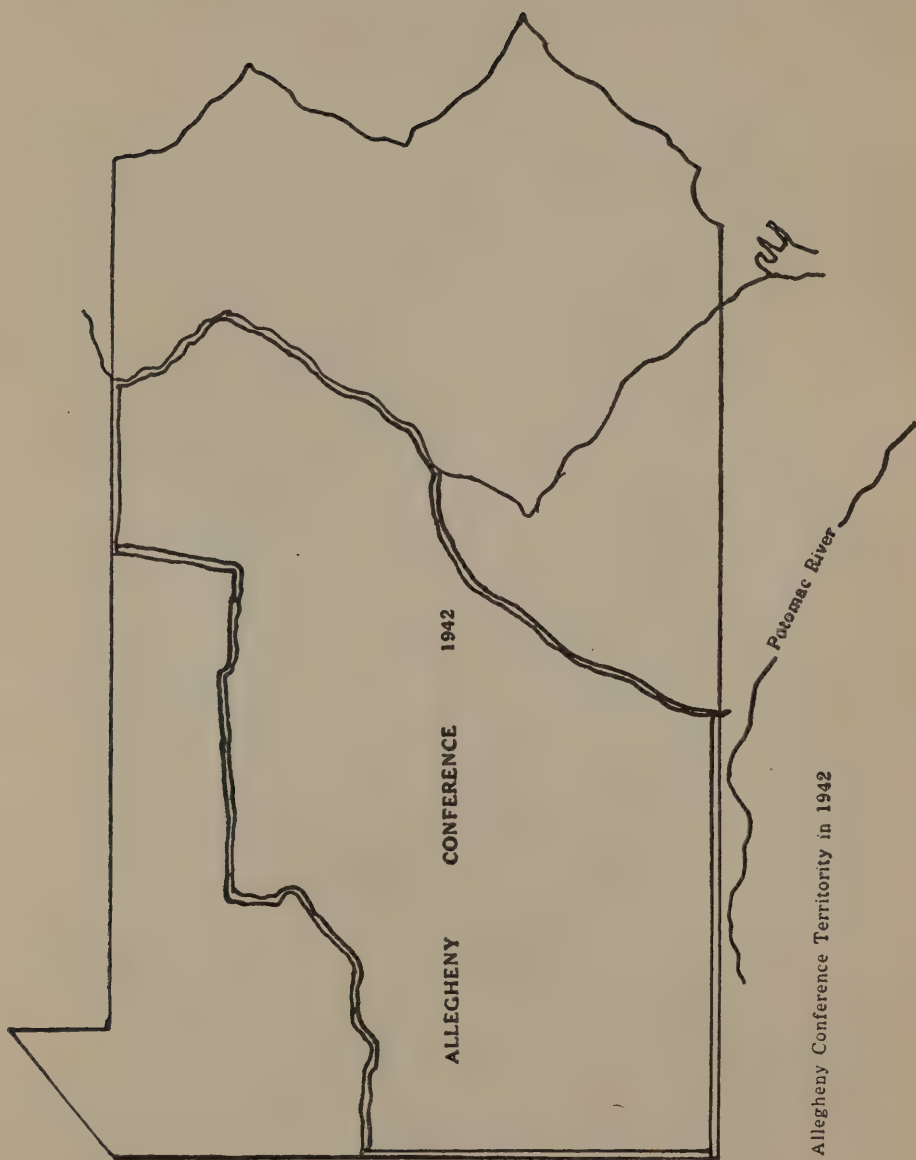
Outstanding among the laymen of this era of change were Mr. Soloman Keister, and Mr. John Ruth of Scottdale, Mr. John Thomas of Johnstown, and Mr. Henry Schum of Altoona. During this period of the emerging of lay leadership these men did much to build the Church in Allegheny Conference. Hundreds

1. Pershing, Justus H., *Op. Cit.*, p. 19.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

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of other laymen all over the Conference made their contributions to the Church in the giving of their time and talents to the work of the Kingdom. Certainly there are many more who are worthy to have their names placed high in the annals of our Church history. In justice to all these leaders of Church growth, we can only pay our tribute to them as churchmen who united in preparing for future generations. To name them all is impossible, nor would they desire it if they could speak to us of their joys in Christian service. These few named ministers and laymen gave their outstanding contributions, while other hundreds gave their lives nobly in the building of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, in the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. Their reward is in the knowledge of a task well done.



Allegheny Conference Territory in 1942



## CHAPTER VII

### UNDER THE CONFERENCE SUPERINTENDENCY, 1908-1943

#### Dr. J. S. Fulton

With the election of Dr. J. S. Fulton to the superintendency of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the opening of a new era was definitely inaugurated. Next to Jacob Ritter, the early dynamic leader of the Conference, no man ever influenced the life of Allegheny Conference as did Dr. J. S. Fulton. For this reason the pages of this chapter are opened with a brief presentation of the life and work of Dr. Fulton.

Dr. J. S. Fulton was born on October 28, 1865, at Winterstown, York County, Pennsylvania. His parents were the Reverend and Mrs. A. E. Fulton, who served together for many years as faithful workers in the ministry of the Allegheny Conference. At the age of 16, Dr. Fulton became a school teacher, that stepping stone to so many professions in the early days of our country's history. He remained in this field of service for 10 years, uniting with the Allegheny Conference in 1892.<sup>1</sup> At this time he was serving his first appointment, being appointed pastor of the Glasgow Charge in 1891 as a Quarterly Conference Minister.<sup>2</sup> For 16 years he served faithfully in the pastorate and then, while pastor of the Wilksburg Church, he was called to the leadership of the Conference. For 20 years he served faithfully in that capacity, retiring voluntarily in 1927 to take over the work of directing the Ministerial Pension and Annuity Campaign of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. During the 20 years in which he served as Conference Superintendent he became an outstanding denominational figure. More and more his leadership gained the respect of the General

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1892, p. 9.

2. *Ibid.*, 1891, p. 49.

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Conference until he became the leading figure in Conference proceedings. General officers who knew him and who worked with him during this period have said that "to oppose Dr. J. S. Fulton on the General Conference floor during the later years of his Superintendency meant political suicide." He was during this period the outstanding disciplinarian of the Church. An illustration of the dynamic strength of the leadership of Dr. Fulton is revealed in the following account of the unification of the Sunday School Board and the Christian Endeavor Board into what is today our Board of Christian Education.

The twenty-ninth General Conference meeting in Buffalo, New York, introduced the question of uniting the two boards into the Board of Christian Education. At first it was apparent that there would be little opposition to the movement. Then Dr. J. S. Fulton took the floor and maintained that the Christian Endeavor work and the Sunday School work were separate functions of the Church and as such needed separate secretaries. The opposition came as a shock to the Conference which had not expected this contrary view to be held by so outstanding a leader. When the matter was brought to a vote it was defeated by a 105-89 vote.<sup>1</sup> It is a tribute to the genius of the leadership of Dr. J. S. Fulton that the unification of the boards failed in 1925. But centralization of general church work in the new age of unification would not be denied, and in 1929, the two Boards were united into the present Board of Christian Education.<sup>2</sup>

In 1931, Dr. Fulton presented to the Conference a history which he had written and titled, **History of the Allegheny Conference**. This book contains invaluable information concerning the local churches of the

1. General Conference Minutes, 1925, p. 185.

2. Ibid., 1929, p. 109.

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Conference, as their pastors and church leaders were able to gather it. After a brief introduction to the early beginnings of the Church and Conference, it gives a splendid technical interpretation of the growth and organization of the Conference during the first 30 years of the twentieth century. Copies of this splendid book are to be found in all the leading homes of the Conference ministry and laity. Dr. S. S. Hough and Dr. W. R. Funk made special contributions to the **History**, Dr. Hough preparing the introduction, and Dr. Funk writing the chapter relating to the Conference superintendency.

When the financial depression of 1931 resulted in an almost total collapse of the benevolence budget of the Church, it was found necessary to eliminate some of the Church offices. Among these was the work of a paid director of ministerial pensions. When the General Conference of 1933 convening in Akron took this action, Dr. Fulton returned to the pastorate in Allegheny Conference and was assigned to the Johnstown Westmont Church. In 1937 he requested that the Conference grant him the relationship of retired elder. From that date on he was one of the most active "retired elders" that the Church has ever known. Until 1942 he constantly traveled the Conference in the interest of ministerial pensions, and in the work of evangelism. The loss of his life companion, Mrs. J. S. Fulton, on November 11, 1941, was a great blow. Closely following this loss came a series of illnesses that kept him hospitalized until the summer of 1942. The convening of the Annual Conference at Connellsville in September, 1942, found him once more actively participating as corresponding secretary and "retired elder."

On March 31st, 1943 the Conference was shocked to hear of the death of this dynamic Churchman. More



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than half of the ministry of the Conference attended the services which were conducted in a private funeral home in Johnstown, the town of his residence. Interment was made at the Grandview Cemetery, which is located in the hills overlooking the city of Johnstown, and which is known best as the resting place of the many hundreds who lost their lives in the Johnstown flood.

Dr. Fulton was a member of innumerable boards and organizations in the Conference and Church. Among the more prominent organizations on which he has served are, The Seminary Board, the Finance Board of the Church, nine General Conferences, Secretary of the Board of Administration since the date of its organization at the Wichita General Conference in 1917, Vice President of the Quincy Orphanage for 25 years, and recording secretary to both the Annual Conference and to the Mutual Benefit Association of the Conference.<sup>1</sup>

Having viewed a sketch of the life of our first Conference superintendent, we turn now to a consideration of Allegheny Conference during the first 20 years spent under the Superintendency system.

While the preceding period of political change was one of great expansion and growth both financially and numerically, the period of the Superintendency from 1907 until 1927 reveals more general advance than any other period in the history of the Conference. There were many contributing factors to this state of affairs. The Conference had now entered definitely into a program of encouragement to the founding of city missions. All along the main lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad the Conference was establishing town and city churches. Development of the coal fields lo-

1. Fulton, J. S., **History of the Allegheny Conference**, pp. 61-22.



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cated within the Conference territory gave opportunity for the establishment of new appointments, and in many cases new stations. Johnstown, Altoona, Greensburg, Scottdale, and other communities where the Church had located were in a state of rapid development. It was definitely a period of rapid expansion throughout Western Pennsylvania, and the Allegheny Conference was not slow to take advantage of it. With the exception of the panic year of 1907, and the world war year of 1918, the growth was steady and solid. The 2 years before mentioned show decreases due to the economic conditions that the entire nation faced at these times.

### **Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Observed**

The first great occasion that the Conference celebrated during these years was that of its seventy-fifth anniversary. The Conference was held in the Greensburg Church of the United Brethren in Christ. While it was the seventy-fifth year of the history of the Conference, it was the seventy-sixth Conference session. For this occasion Rev. L. W. Stahl had collected a brief history of the preceding years of the Conference's service and endeavor. A 27-page report of his efforts appears in the 1913 Allegheny Conference Minutes.<sup>1</sup>

L. W. Stahl was born at Madison, Pennsylvania, December 17, 1851, and died in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, February 10, 1930. He was the outstanding historian of the Conference during the period of the Superintendency. He spent 59 years in ministerial service, 14 of these years being spent in the Presiding Eldership of the Conference. Following the reorganization of the Church Extension and Missionary Society in 1903, he served as its president for the succeeding

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1913, pp. 53-80.

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27 years. His services in this capacity are well remembered throughout the Conference.

### First World War Influences

The First World War made little hardship for the Allegheny Conference as a whole. None of her licensed ministers were taken from the field of service to enter into the chaplaincy, although W. G. Stiverson had entered the chaplaincy from the pastorate of the Altoona First United Brethren Church in July, 1910.

The 1919 Annual Conference prepared the following memorial to the soldier dead of the Conference:

We have just passed through the world's greatest war, and as many of our families are feeling the effects of this awful carnage, because of loved ones, who have laid their lives upon the altar of their country, and who will never return to their homes and firesides:

We, the members of Allegheny Conference, express our deepest sympathy to the bereaved families.

Realizing that human sympathy avails but little, however sincere and heartfelt it may be, we commend them to HIM who alone can steady our faith, comfort our hearts, inspire our hopes and strengthen us for each successive day until the morning comes, when He shall appear, who has said, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' <sup>1</sup>

While the War caused little noticeable effect upon the record of the active ministry, the Superintendent was forced to call attention at the 1919 Conference to the fact that there was a noticeable dearth of ministers. His appeal to the Conference with respect to this problem is given in part with these words:

I am sure these cases are in part responsible for this state of things. 1. The retiring of a num-

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1919, p. 87.

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ber of our older ministers because of affliction rather than old age. 2. Failure in health of a number of our younger ministers. 3. The leaving the pastorate for other lines of activity. 4. The failure to take out license because of the war spirit. 5. The planning of parents to have their sons enter other spheres of activity.<sup>1</sup>

### **The United Enlistment Movement**

This challenge presented to the Annual Conference had been the result of an important meeting of the Board of Administration which had been held October 22-24, 1918. J. S. Kendall, the executive secretary of the Board resigned at this meeting, and in his place Dr. S. S. Hough was elected. Dr. J. S. Fulton was the recording secretary and remained a servant of the Board until his death.

At this meeting the Board of Administration took a survey of world conditions and of the Church itself. The result of this intensive study was the opening of the United Enlistment Campaign. The key note sounded in the movement was unification and evangelization of the Church program. The problem that was facing the entire Church was not that of raising money, but rather that of raising men.<sup>2</sup> In the presentation of the work of the Board, Dr. S. S. Hough said very effectively that "It was felt that our people must be called to 'Pray not for easy lives; not for tasks equal to our powers, but for powers equal to our tasks'.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless it was very evident in the face of changing economic conditions that the inflationary spirit that had swept the country made it necessary for a radical change in our benevolent financial program.

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1919, p. 51.

2. General Conference Proceedings, 1921, p. 236.

3. Ibid.



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Thus the Board put into action a united program calling for a vision of unified effort on the part of the general Church. The following outline briefly sketches the work and its results:

1. The Stewardship of Intercession. Forty thousand members were enrolled to pray for the work of the Church within the two years of the campaign.

2. The Stewardship of Life. The Church being face to face with the problem of a shortage of Christian leaders sent out an appeal for life work recruits. The writer is proud to be considered as one among the 1500 young people who responded to this appeal.

3. The Stewardship of Property. God's ownership and man's stewardship ought to be acknowledged. The Annual Conference sessions of 1919 supported this movement to the extent that 80 per cent of the ministers and lay members attending registered as tithing stewards.

4. The Stewardship of the Gospel. Emphasis was placed on personal soul winning as a life work.<sup>1</sup>

The financial needs of the general Church were heavy at this period, with every agency pressing to the utmost its claims in order that their work might be carried on. Appeals became so numerous that pastors became both disgusted and discouraged, for they realized the bad psychological approach and at the same time understood the crying needs of the Church. Realizing this, the Board of Administration presented its greatest challenge by asking for \$4,000,000 to be raised in two years under the United Enlistment movement, and that the money be given to the general Church interests on a percentage basis. Thus the minor appeals were united into one climatic effort that more than doubled existing benevolence assessments.

1. General Conference Proceedings, 1921, pp. 236-238.



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The United Enlistment Campaign resulted in the greatest monetary and spiritual uplift that the Church had experienced in many years. While the \$4,000,000 budget was not raised in full as a part of a two-year program, the challenge that it issued raised the morale and spirit of all the conferences. Two million seven hundred thousand dollars or 68 per cent were actually raised during the two years. This meant that the Church had doubled its giving over the preceding quadrennium and had tripled its giving over the quadrennium ending in 1913. Never before had the Church seen such a surge in giving.

This impetus gave such a vision to the Allegheny Conference that its benevolence budget immediately more than doubled and, with the exception of the depression years of 1931-1938, remained consistently, high long after the great campaign had been forgotten. Among the field workers representing the United Enlistment Movement was Rev. W. V. Barnhart, whose long service to the Allegheny Conference came to a close at the 1942 Conference when he asked for a retired Elder's relationship to the Conference. He closed out a period of 48 years of active service to his Church when this relationship was granted.

A brief outline of the rapid growth in the benevolent giving of Allegheny Conference would present more clearly the influence of this campaign upon the Conference. Until the year 1920, when the United Enlistment Campaign closed its first year, Allegheny Conference had never given as much as \$30,000 to the General Benevolence Budget. The following figures should be very revealing:

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Year	General Benevolence
1920	\$30,605
1921	71,319
1922	58,742
1923	63,471
1924	64,794
1925	64,326
1926	60,907
1927	63,706
1928	60,609
1929	60,408
1930	60,242
1931	45,691
1932	38,832
1937	32,770
1942	48,943

It must be kept in mind that this is the report of the general benevolences of the Conference, and not the report of the total benevolences.

The value of the United Enlistment Campaign to the Church in general, and to Allegheny Conference in particular, will never be fully known. Statistics do not always reveal the true depth and power of a movement, and do not fully do so in this case. Dr. Hough, in the presentation of his report as executive secretary of the Board of Administration, enumerated some of the by-products of the campaign. These were:

1. A vision of the whole task to the whole membership. Members of our Church have begun to think and act in terms of the whole denomination.
2. A denominational consciousness of our mission, possibilities, strength and unity.
3. Our members have been aroused to pay the debts on their churches, provide better salaries for their ministers and more adequate church facilities. More money was paid to wipe out church debts,

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build new churches, and increase pastors' salaries, the past two years than in any previous five years.

4. The campaign revealed a missing link . . . our records do not give the names of our local churches, but our charges only.
5. We have discovered the importance of 'conference' or 'council.' In the past the United Brethren Church has relied too exclusively on preaching and public addresses.<sup>1</sup>

The number of youth turned into the halls of our colleges and seminaries as a result of this movement will never be fully known. Its impetus gave us some preparation to face the dark days of the depression in the years following 1931. A very complete account of the results of the two-year campaign is found in the General Conference minutes of 1921.<sup>2</sup>

### **Ministerial Pension Endowment Fund Plan**

During the General Conference of 1921, the Ministerial Pension Endowment Fund Plan was adopted. Dr. J. S. Fulton was the chairman of the committee of pensions, but it was Dr. H. H. Baish, superintendent of the Altoona Schools for many years, and a member of the Altoona Second United Brethren Church, who was the author of the plan. Dr. Baish was one of the outstanding laymen of Allegheny Conference and was honored by the Conference in being sent as its representative to General Conference as Conference delegate on three separate occasions. Dr. Baish is now a member of the East Pennsylvania Conference. This change was necessitated when he moved to Harrisburg to become the Director of the Pennsylvania State Teachers Retirement Fund.

While many obstacles have been placed before the Ministerial Pension Campaign, the 1942 Annual Confe-

1. General Conference Proceedings, 1921, p. 245.

2. Ibid., pp. 234 - 251.

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rence reported that 50 per cent of the Allegheny Conference apportionment of \$96,915 has been paid, and the spirit is high to complete the work by July 1, 1943.

### **Preachers' Aid Fund**

While the Church as a whole was slow to adopt a pension plan for her retired and disabled ministers, Allegheny Conference had made some provision from the early days of her existence. In 1843 the Conference minutes record that "James D. Williby received ten dollars of the Benevolence Fund money. The above has been received by James D. Williby."<sup>1</sup> This money was probably a gift of the "Widow Snyder" fund. David Snyder was one of the prominent preachers of the early Church. The 1804 Conference met at his home. When he died, he left a thousand dollar fund, the interest of which was to be used for benevolent purposes. His death occurred in 1819. Seven years later his wife died leaving \$1,000 to be used as a fund for the support of preachers, or others in need.<sup>2</sup> This fund was available to all of the Conference and was known as the "Widow Snyder Fund."

In time the Conference gradually assumed a personal responsibility toward its ministry with the result that in 1907 there was \$7,150 in the fund. <sup>3</sup> It was decided at the Conference in 1918 to raise a \$50,000 endowment Preachers' Aid Fund.<sup>4</sup> The work progressed so rapidly that the 1922 Conference was able to report that \$50,499.77 was invested in the Preacher's Aid Fund.<sup>5</sup> By 1930 this sum had risen to \$60,407.82.<sup>6</sup> Due to the non-productive bonds which are placed with the U. B. Publishing House, the fund has been of little

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1843, p. 2.

2. Drury, A. W., History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, p. 355.

3. Fulton, J. S., History of Allegheny Conference, p. 50.

4. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1918, p. 58.

5. Ibid., 1922, p. 102.

6. Fulton, J. S., History of Allegheny Conference. p. 50.



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use to the Conference in recent years, but with the improvement in the financial status of the Publishing House better things are hoped for in the care for the retired ministers of this Conference.

### Conference Leaders

Several outstanding leaders developed during the administration of Dr. J. S. Fulton. Most outstanding of all in his influence upon the Conference was Dr. W. G. Fulton, a brother of the Superintendent.

### Dr. W. G. Fulton

Dr. W. G. Fulton was born on the eighth of January, 1876. Raised in a minister's home, he was passionately interested in the reports of local, Conference and denominational work from the days of his boyhood. As a result it was only natural to find him entering the ministerial work of the Conference in 1903. During his 40 years in pastoral service he has served only 7 churches. From the early days of his Conference membership, Dr. Fulton entered fully into the work of the Conference and of the denomination. For 20 years (1909-1929) he served as the corresponding secretary-treasurer of the Young People's Association. Then in 1929, with the establishment of the Board of Christian Education, he became the secretary - treasurer of that organization. This Office he holds at the present time. He has represented his Conference at three General Conference sessions and served on the denominational Board of Control from 1917 until 1929.

The work of Dr. W. G. Fulton in our Young People's Societies deserves the highest commendation and appreciation. His interest and enthusiasm in every youth program has remained very keen throughout the entire 40 years of his ministry. At the present time he

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is Chairman of the fourth year study course committee, a post he has filled since 1917. He first served on the committee in 1910 and is now in the thirty-second year of service in this educational field. He has served for 6 years as secretary-treasurer of Camp Madison, a youth camp conducted during the summer months at the Madison Church, and has constantly worked with all the Conference camps, including the present camp conducted at Camp Harmony.

But his most outstanding contribution to the Conference has been his service as statistical secretary. In this office he has consistently, yet kindly and humorously, prodded his fellow ministers into being good statisticians and in spite of themselves. For many years the reports of Allegheny Conference have been clear, concise, and easily interpreted because of the perseverance of Dr. W. G. Fulton.

He first served in this capacity in 1907 at the election of the Conference. Then for the next 6 years the statistical secretary was appointed by the recording secretary, and another was appointed to this office. In 1914, however, the election system was again in vogue and Dr. W. G. Fulton was elected statistical secretary. From that date until this he has served the Conference continuously in that important work.

Some of his humorous yet suggestive introductions to his reports are herein given that his method might the more be appreciated. They are copied from his personal records as he gave them to the writer:

### **Pastors' Reports**

Next year a new blank for Pastor's Reports will be provided. Pastors are urged to study the 'Explanatory Notes' carefully before filling in the blanks. Make out your report carefully with a view to having it absolutely correct.

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For your study and guidance and with the purpose of helping you if you need help, I submit for your thoughtful consideration the following:

Last year there were submitted 201 reports. Of this number, something was wrong with 90 of them. With some, very little, but with others, a great deal, the correcting of which took extra time and considerable trouble, even to the extent of telegrams and long distance calls, the expense of which was met by the statistical secretary.

I tabulated the reports very carefully and classified the 'errors' and 'short comings' as follows:—	
Starting report with wrong number of members..	5
Addition of 'members in church' wrong .....	5
Omitted increase or decrease .....	3
No. C. E. Societies listed when I knew better....	2
No <b>Telescopes</b> reported when there was a nice list before .....	2
No <b>Evangelists</b> or average in Sunday School .....	2
Placed Current Expense in with Benevolence ....	1
Mistake in addition, money .....	25
Mistake in Subtracting net values .....	5
Building Fund in wrong place .....	1
No comparisons .....	3
Duplication in money .....	3
No Totals for all purposes .....	5
Figures blotted making deciphering necessary....	5
Carried cents when directed not to.....	17
Names omitted ..	3
'Bum' typewriter or typewriter ribbon requiring use of magnifying glass and assistance to decipher .....	17

Some reports had several of these deficiencies, but 90 reports were subject to correction, and 47 ministers were involved. I hope the reports will be

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better this year, and perfect--next year. **WATCH YOUR STEP.**

W. G. Fulton, Statistical Secretary.

Again in 1937 the report carried a reminder as to the method to be used in preparing a Pastor's Report. He wrote as follows:

Reports as a rule are in good shape. A few still persist in carrying the cents. Please read the notes or the directions on the reports.

Also several are still using the same old type-writer ribbon of 1933. The days of its use are now long past.

In his 1942 report to the Conference, he recorded the following:

The successor's Record Books from all the charges were presented except---two. The one is now in my possession, having just arrived. The other failed to appear due to a lapse of memory upon the part of its sponsor, who vouched for the correctness of it, and was excused on the promise that it never should occur again.

A few still insist on carrying the 'cents,' but the writer has now given them up and committed them to the error of their ways.

Such reports as these have kept the Conference ministers constantly alert, and under the kindly guidance of Dr. Fulton the records have been meticulously perfect when each Conference session has closed.

Other leaders of this period include Dr. B. F. Bungard, who served as Chaplain of the Pennsylvania State Legislature, 1921-22, and was active as an elected member of the State Legislature, 1915-22; Rev. William G. Stiverson, Chaplain of the Eighth Cavalry of the United States Army, 1910-1913, at which date he transferred his Conference membership to the South



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East Ohio Conference; Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Hayes, missionaries to Japan, 1916-1924; W. W. Williamson, Field Agent for Otterbein College from 1909-1912; W. V. Barnhart, Field Agent for Church Election, 1917-1919, Field Agent for the United Enlistment movement, 1920; Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Risley, missionaries to Africa, 1910-1916, and 1919-1925; Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Sholty, missionaries to Japan, 1922-1927; and Miss Naomi R. Wilson, missionary to Africa, 1917---

### W. W. Williamson

W. W. Williamson entered the Allegheny Conference by letter of transfer in 1897, and held pastorates at Altoona, Johnstown, and Scottdale before entering into the field work at Otterbein College. His name is of special interest because of the fame gained by his son in the field of choral music. John Williamson, director of the world famous Westminster Choir, is the son of W. W. Williamson. Rev. Williamson transferred to the East Ohio Conference in 1912.

Others who served in general offices in this period were Dr. S. S. Hough and Dr. W. R. Funk whose work has been mentioned in connection with an earlier period.

### Administration of the Second Superintendent

At the Annual Conference held in the Park Avenue Church of the United Brethren in Christ at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in 1927, Dr. J. S. Fulton closed his annual report with these words:

It saddens my heart to leave all of this and the friends in the ministry and laity whose fine cooperation has made it possible to achieve... and it is only the conviction born upon me by my Bishop with the other Bishops and General Officers, the pension committee and other Church leaders, added to my own knowledge of a great need that induces me to heed what seems to be a Divine Call

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to enter a new field and seek to make the days of our aged and disabled ministers have a brighter glow by providing a pension for them in times of old age or disability. . . . God grant to my successor such wisdom and grace as will enable him to lead you all to the highest possible success in the accomplishment of the work of the Kingdom is my prayer as I now submit this my twentieth and final report as your Conference Superintendent and brother in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

On Friday morning, September 23, 1927, the election of the Conference Superintendent was held and resulted with the election, on the second ballot, of Dr. Warren Shuey Wilson, who received a total of 116 votes out of 179 ballots cast. Thereupon Dr. C. W. Winey moved that the vote be made unanimous, and this motion was carried.

It was a very auspicious start for the new superintendent. Unfortunately for Dr. Wilson, he was to be almost immediately faced with the greatest national depression or panic that the country ever faced. For 2 years following his election the Conference continued to grow and prosper. Then suddenly in the fall of 1929, with the collapse of industrial conditions, the Church began to decline both in number and in finances. The benevolence budget declined from \$60,242 in 1929 to \$45,691 in 1930. By 1935 this amount had decreased to \$30,858. By 1936, the year in which Dr. Wilson retired from the superintendency, the upward surge had begun and the benevolence budget giving had increased to \$32,020. Pastor's salaries and Church membership records were also showing increases as the nation began to recover from the economic collapse of the preceding 5 years.

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1927, p. 94.

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### Dr. W. S. Wilson

Dr. W. S. Wilson was born November 22, 1871 in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. He is the son of Isaac Wilson and Rachel Emma Wilson. He was converted 20 years later in the Mt. Pleasant Church of the Clarion River Charge. On May 5, 1907, he completed his educational work at Bonebrake Theological Seminary, then Union Biblical Seminary, and was ordained to the office of Elder by Bishop J. S. Mills. After serving 20 years in the pastoral work of the Conference, he was called to the office of Superintendent from the pastoral supervision of the Pitcairn Church of the United Brethren in Christ. <sup>1</sup>

### Church Indebtedness

One of the greatest problems faced by Dr. Wilson and the Conference during the period of his administration was that of church indebtedness. During the boom years of the early twenties many of the churches of the Conference built beautiful new churches with the expectation that the prosperity of the nation would be lasting. In 1927 the Conference church building indebtedness stood at \$576,788, and the parsonage debts of \$56,585 increased the grand total to \$633,373. Such a debt obligated the Conference annually to more than \$35,000 for interest payments alone.

To the credit of the Conference it must be said that the ministry and laity rallied to the heroic task of saving many of these indebted churches for the Conference and the Church. As a result not one church building was permanently lost to the Allegheny Conference.

### Pastoral Support

Pastoral support became a problem of paramount importance to the Conference during the period of the depression. Many of the pastors served for salaries of

1. Fulton, J. S., **History of Allegheny Conference**, pp. 63-65.



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\$500 and \$600 a year. Each succeeding Annual Conference found more and more pastors appealing to the stationing committee for a living wage and an adequate remuneration for their loyal service. All-night meetings of the stationing committee for the purpose of interview with pastor and delegate alike became the accepted order as the problems became more and more pressing. In 1935, 40 charges paid less than \$1,000 in salary and in many cases these charges required several hundred dollars to be expended by the pastor in travel, if the charge was to be properly served. With practically no benevolence money available to meet this accepted need for minimum salary appropriations, the Conference Superintendent and Bishop were unable to do much more than lend a sympathetic ear to the multitude of appeals that were presented to them.

### Unique Accident

In the midst of this era of travail there occurred an incident that was unique in regard to the persons involved.

On the second of February, 1933, the Allegheny Conference lost one of her most aggressive pastors, Rev. John R. Watson, by death. On the fourth of February a carload of United Brethren ministers left Johnstown by automobile in order that they might attend the funeral services which were held in the McKeesport Kephart United Brethren Church. While enroute to McKeesport, the car skidded on the icy road, and crashed against a nearby tree. All the passengers of the car were critically injured and spent months in Johnstown hospitals. The passenger list included Dr. J. S. Fulton, ex-Conference Superintendent; Dr. W. S. Wilson, Conference Superintendent; and Dr. E. B. Learish, who was to be the next Conference Superintendent. The fourth ministerial member of the party was Dr. F.



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W. Davis, who was at that time pastor of the Johnstown First United Brethren Church. Fortunately for the Conference, the lives of all these ministers were spared, and to this time they continue to serve faithfully in the various fields of service to which they have been called.

### **Decline in Leadership**

In closing the consideration of the period of the administration of Dr. W. S. Wilson there is one noticeable observation to be made. Allegheny Conference has always stood high in her denominational leadership and at one time, during the period of expansion and change, her leaders were found in practically all fields of denominational service. Following the close of the World War, very few Allegheny Conference men were invited to fill educational and administrative offices in the Church. During the period of the second Conference Superintendent, only one minister entered into denominational work, namely, Rev. Carl Eschbaugh.

### **Rev. Carl Eschbaugh**

Rev. Carl Eschbaugh, the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Eschbaugh of 1363 Washington Avenue, Tyrone, Pennsylvania, entered Otterbein College soon after the completion of his high school work at Tyrone High School. He was active in many of the school organizations, and was elected to the presidency of his class in 1924, and of the Y.M.C.A. Cabinet in 1925.<sup>1</sup> Completing his college work in 1926, he immediately entered into Y.M.C.A. work as the Boys' secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in North Canton, Ohio.

In 1929, Rev. Eschbaugh resigned his work at Canton to become a missionary to the Philippine Islands. In November, 1929, he and Mrs. Eschbaugh and their one-year-old daughter arrived in the Luzon Province and began their work as United Brethren missionaries. Since that time they have been home on furlough only once, in 1936.

1. *The Sibyl*, Otterbein College Yearbook, 1926, p. 50.

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Just preceding the opening of the Battle for the Philippines that followed so soon after the Pearl Harbor attack, Mrs. Eschbaugh and their three children came to America to secure medical attention for their youngest child. On January first, 1942, they received the cheering message by cablegram, "Well and safe, Carl." Since that time communications have been destroyed and the last report concerning the whereabouts of Rev. Eschbaugh was that it was supposed that he had retired into the hills with many of the Filipinos, and that he was continuing his work there. The Conference eagerly awaits further word from him, and his noble compatriots.

Mrs. Ruth Eschbaugh and their children, Margaret, aged 14, James, aged 12, and Robert aged 10, are living at the present time in Dearborn, Michigan, and anxiously awaiting the time when they will again be reunited with their husband and father.

### **Administration of the Third Superintendent**

The 1936 Annual Conference met in session on September 17, 1936, at the Johnstown Park Avenue Church of the United Brethren in Christ. It was a coincidence that the retirement of the first two Conference superintendents occurred in this same church. In presenting his final report as superintendent, Dr. Wilson made the following statement:

For the past nine years I have given myself without reserve to the duties of my office, and in a sense it is not easy to turn from this work when we think of the new friendships and associations built up during the years, but being conscientiously led in my course, I turn today from the responsibilities of this office, feeling that I have done my best, and I set my face toward the pastorate again. I personally will always cherish those who have

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labored with me in the task that was mine, and shall never forget the counsel, kindness, patience and sympathetic cooperation of Bishop Batdorf in the eight years that it has been my privilege and joy to work with him, especially when we have sat together into the deep hours of the night, and beyond, even toward the dawn of the day, as we faced together the responsibilities of which no one knows until it becomes an experience, trying to solve the issues of those hours. . . . I now with a good conscience am happy to submit to you today this my ninth annual and final report as conference superintendent.<sup>1</sup>

The Conference then proceeded with the election of its third superintendent, and on the fourth ballot, Reverend E. Burton Learish, D. D. was elected, receiving 108 out of 177 votes cast. Dr. E. C. Weaver then moved that the election be made unanimous, and the motion was adopted.<sup>2</sup>

### Dr. E. B. Learish

Rev. E. B. Learish, D. D. was born April 6, 1886, at Wallacetown, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. He is the son of William Henry Learish and Nancy Elizabeth Rolles Learish. When he had reached the age of 17 he was called to enter the ministry, and with that definite call in mind he entered the Martin Boehm Academy, a complementary institution to Otterbein College, and completed his training there in 1907. In 1908 he entered Bonebrake Theological Seminary and completed the three-year English course for undergraduates at that institution in 1911. Still eager in his quest for knowledge, he decided to return to the Otterbein Campus and complete the full college course. He graduated from Otterbein College in 1915, returning

1. Allegheny Conference Minutes, 1936, p. 79.

2. Ibid., p. 63.



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10 years later to receive his honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the same institution.

Dr. Learish has always been an Otterbein enthusiast, being a member of the College Board of Trustees from 1918 until the present writing. For many years he served as Vice President of the Board, retiring at the time of the election of Mr. Homer Kline of Wilkesburg to the presidency. Dr. Learish felt that Allegheny Conference should not control both of these high offices, and with his customary modesty he retired from that office in order that another conference might be represented in the official leadership of the Board of Trustees of Otterbein College. He has served as a member of the Commission on Evangelism of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches since his election to the superintendency. For the past 2 Quadrennial Conferences, those of 1937 and 1941, he has represented Allegheny Conference as a regularly elected delegate. At the 1942 Conference session, Dr. Learish was elected to the office of superintendent for the seventh consecutive time.

A general spirit of optimism prevailed with the opening of the Conference year of 1936. National conditions were showing improvement, and churches were showing a tendency to gain back some of the ground lost during the days of the depression.

### **Centennial Observance**

The Conference in session had at the suggestion of the Conference Superintendent, Dr. W. S. Wilson, in his closing report, made arrangements for the observance of the Centennial Session of the Conference. At the invitation of the Mt. Pleasant Church, it was decided to hold this Conference session at Mt. Pleasant where the first Conference convened in 1839.

There is an apparent discrepancy in the holding of the Centennial Session in 1937 rather than in 1938. An explanation of this perplexing state of affairs is here-



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with given. For many years the Conference had constantly met in the months of January, February or March. The reasons for this time of meeting have been discussed earlier. In 1880, it was decided that the month of September would be a more favorable month in which to meet, and so there were two Conference sessions during that year, the one in the month of February, and the other in the month of September. As a result, from that time on we have always had one more session of Conference than we have had years of existence.

The Centennial observance was featured by many historical events. Addresses on the historical background of the Conference and of the denomination were given by Dr. W. G. Fulton, Dr. S. S. Hough and Bishop G. D. Batdorf. On the afternoon of Saturday, September the eighteenth, the Conference visited such points of interest as the old Mt. Pleasant Institute buildings, Abraham Draksel's grave, and the site of the old Bonnet School House.

On the site of the Bonnet School House, a Rock of Ages granite marker, 30 by 30 by 12 inches in size, had been erected in 1934 at a cost of \$114.60. On this stone. Roman sand carved letters one and one-fourth inches in size had been carved stating:

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IN THE BONNET SCHOOL HOUSE ON THIS SITE  
THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
. CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN  
CHRIST WAS HELD

A. D. 1815.<sup>1</sup>

On Saturday evening a historical pageant, written by Mrs. Sara Jane Baker Sidaway of Wilkinsburg, was presented in the Mt. Pleasant High School Auditorium.

Five years have passed since the holding of this Centennial observance of Allegheny Conference. They have been years of steady progress under the direction of Dr. E. Burton Learish, who is now beginning the seventh year of his Conference leadership. The statistical chart at the close of this chapter will reveal that the catastrophic days of the depression years have been supplanted by a consistent progress in the spiritual and physical properties of the Church. This progress is the result of gigantic efforts upon the part of laity and ministry alike.

To mention the names of ministers and laity who have given themselves fully to the work of the Kingdom of Christ in Allegheny Conference would be to quote page after page of Conference minutes, for countless ministers and laity have united to give stability and growth to the Conference.

### **Lay Leadership**

At the present time the work of two laymen of the Conference is more outstanding in the leadership field than others. They are Mr. William Fox of Connellsville and Mr. Homer Ruth of Scottdale. Throughout the Conference there are many other men worthy of special mention in this connection, but because the test of history has not yet been applied to their lives, the writer hesitates to mention any lest he miss others of equal or even greater influence in the life of the

1. *Allegheny Conference Minutes*, 1934, p. 65.

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Church. In the Greensburg District of the Conference, where the writer has served for 11 of the 12 years of his Allegheny Conference ministry, there are several men who have given largely of their lives in Conference service. Among these are Mr. Avra N. Pershing, Senior, the son of Rev. J. H. Pershing, whose name has been prominently mentioned in other connections. Mr. Pershing is a member of the Conference Board of Trustees, and has served as delegate at 3 General Conferences. His son, Attorney Avra N. Pershing, Jr., is with the United States Army at the present time serving as a First Lieutenant. Preceding his Army affiliation, Attorney Pershing served as Conference lawyer. Both men are members of the Greensburg Church.

Mr. William Fox is a business man in Connellsville, and has been active in the work of the local church for many years. He has served as delegate to 3 General Conferences, and has been very active in the denominational brotherhood work. His splendid planning as lay leader of the Greensburg District laid the ground work for the successful raising of tens of thousands of dollars of ministerial pension money. He, together with Rev. M. M. Snyder, the ministerial district leader, presented to the Greensburg District of the Allegheny Conference a Bond Program. This arrangement called for the presentation of a ministerial pension bond to every family or organization that would contribute \$12 or more within a 12-month period. The plan was so successful in the District that it became the plan of the Conference as other districts wrote to Mr. Fox for the materials, and for his personal attention to their individual problems. As a result, Mr. Fox has had various calls upon his time, many of them taking him to the extremities of the Conference, and have made him the most widely known of all the Conference laymen. Mr. Fox and Rev. M. M. Snyder have formed a splendid team of enterprising Christian leaders that has no

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equal in the Conference in this particular field of service. Other offices held by Mr. Fox are President of the Laymen's Association of the Conference, President of the Otterbein Brotherhood of the Conference, and a member of the Conference Committee on Ministerial Pensions.

Mr. Homer Ruth is engaged in business in Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, where he has resided from the time of his birth. He is the son of Mr. John Ruth, who was one of the two delegates sent to General Conference in 1901. It was at this Conference that equal representation was voted to the laity of the Church. Mr. Homer Ruth succeeded his father as treasurer of the Preachers' Aid Fund. He is also the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees at the present time, which Board includes the Preachers' Aid Fund. Mr. Ruth has represented his Conference at five General Conferences and is known throughout the Church for his willing spirit of cooperation.

In the midst of a picture of optimism there must be presented one dark cloud in the present history of Allegheny Conference. Her position of denominational Church leadership has faded constantly until at the present time this great Conference has no representative in any of the general Church offices or in any of the various fields of educational program work. At one time she was represented by three college presidents, two Bishops, the editor of the **Telescope**, college and seminary teachers and general officers. Today she has no representation in any field. There is one possible exception to this statement. Rev. J. Neely Boyer is at the present time the pastor of the Otterbein College Church in Westerville, Ohio. While this pastoral work would not be considered a denominational office, it does give the Conference one link with the denominational program.



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One other Conference minister, Rev. Glen Shaffer, is employed outside the Conference. Rev. Shaffer is now in training to become a Chaplain in the United States Army. Others of the Conference men are planning to enter into this necessary work in the near future.

As long as Allegheny Conference is without general Church representation she will not be able to utilize fully her great resources in Church and Conference development. The inspiration of a direct Conference connection with the general Church is beyond description. Let us hope that both the Conference and general Church leaders will become conscious of this weakness, and use some of the fine leadership of Allegheny Conference in positions of influence and service in the various denominational offices.

With this challenge we close this history of the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. The adventuring spirit of the little band of 8 circuit preachers who initiated the work of Allegheny Conference in the year 1838 still lives in the lives of the 100 men and women who are at present employed in ministering to the needs of the 33,577 members of the 203 churches of this area. Future history will record continued progress as today's Conference churchmen live fully their lives, cognizant of the challenge of this age to the Church of Jesus Christ in general and to the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ in particular.

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### CONCLUSIONS

A study of the facts pertaining to the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ seems to warrant the following conclusions:

#### Leadership

The ruggedness and undeveloped state of the territory of the early Conference placed upon each pastor the necessity of creating his own advancement. His vision was always that of a great harvest of souls; for such a harvest would increase the stability of the community, enrich the lives of the communicants, and strengthen the local Christian Church. Dr. J. S. Fulton once said that privation would make some men and break others. Such was the case with the leadership of the Allegheny Conference during the period of her early expansion. Time and again some called for aid while others sought the vision of victory which they trusted faith in God would give. The weaker men dropped from the ranks of Conference leadership and the stronger men created the fine Conference organization that exists today. Necessity was the mother of invention, the creator of enterprise, and the revealer of vision.

During these past 105 years of the existence of the Allegheny Conference, the aggressive leadership of this Conference has been evidenced in every United Brethren denominational struggle. During the period of organization and early growth Dr. Jacob Ritter, Rev. J. B. Ressler, and Rev. Isaiah Potter led the entire Denomination in its fight for the advancement of education. As early as 1844 all three of these men were constantly appealing to the entire Denomination to provide educational provisions. Their influence was felt in the Conference and denominational leadership for the next 50 years. It was chiefly as a result of their

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vision that toward the close of the nineteenth century the Allegheny Conference was represented in the denomination by two bishops, the editor of the **Religious Telescope**, the agent for the Publishing House, the editor of the **Watchward**, four college presidents, and a host of college professors and missionaries. These early leaders were quick to accept educational advance, and to incorporate the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor programs into the Conference work. It has been noticed that the young people's movement was active in the Allegheny Conference before the time the national organization was formulated by Francis E. Clark.

In recent years the expansion of the Allegheny Conference into new areas of service has apparently stopped, and today there seems to be an unconscious acceptance of the status quo in the minds of the laity and ministry alike. It is an almost unanimous understanding that promotion is to be granted rather than to be achieved in the field of labor where the minister is employed, and that the church must forever remain in the same classification of a past generation. The changing economic conditions of the past decade have greatly challenged this acceptance of the status quo, but as yet these have not been generally recognized.

### Practices and Customs

Social customs were in a constant state of transition as the Conference was meeting the changing conditions and needs of the country at large. The one outstanding exception to this statement is the steadfast opposition that the Conference and Church exhibited to slavery dating from the 1821 General Conference. While this action limited the southward expansion of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, it gave

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her a sense of solidarity and assurance that has never been shaken.

The keeping of records was taboo in the early days of the United Brethren Church. Many of the Church brethren felt that to keep records was contrary to the will of God. In the Allegheny Conference the efforts of Jacob Ritter were largely responsible for initiating the practice of the keeping of Church rolls and records.

Home stills for the manufacturing of liquor were common in the days of the formation of the Allegheny Conference. However, it was only 11 years later, in 1849, that a unanimous recommendation was forwarded to the General Conference from the Allegheny Conference that "the use of ardent spirits as a beverage throughout our Church" be prohibited.

Early Conference records point to the constant use of tobacco by laity and ministry alike, but a change of standards brought about the adoption of the clause in the Discipline that recommended the abstinence from the use of tobacco by the laity, and the prohibition of its use by the ministry.

The influence of the Allegheny Conference upon the denominational Church in bringing about the change in the laws against belonging to secret societies was the determining factor in the more liberal interpretation that was later made regarding this matter.

While not the first to suggest the use of a choir and organ in the Church, the Allegheny Conference provided much of the leadership for the general Church in adopting the use of musical instruments and trained choirs into the local church program.

Coincidental with the development of the country came the change in pastoral duties. From 1838 until 1942 the Conference has increased in membership from



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approximately 1200 members to its present membership of 33,577. During this period of time the 350-mile circuit has been replaced by the "station" and the two or three point "charge."

### Finance

While there was a constant growing appreciation of the financial needs of the Christian Church among the membership of the Allegheny Conference, it was the United Enlistment Movement that gave the greatest impetus to Christian stewardship. While there was a sharp decrease in giving during the years of the depression, at no time did the net benevolent and current offerings of the Conference drop to as low a level as had been maintained in the days preceding the United Enlistment Campaign. The property valuation of the Conference has increased constantly through the past 105 years with the result that today it is estimated at \$4,321,122. The few church buildings in existence at the time of the Conference organization in 1838 would have been valued under \$10,000.

### Spiritual

There is always a tendency on the part of humanity to look back on the past as the age of highest achievement. Just as the Christian church is inclined to look back to the advantages of the early church and overlook its weaknesses and immaturity, so we are often inclined to look back to the early days of our Conference as representing the "good old days" of deep spirituality and full personal consecration. While the early Conference fathers did possess unusual courage and determination, it is also true that they possessed marked weaknesses and prejudices. But to their everlasting credit it must be maintained that they kept their minds open to the changes of the social, economic and educational life about them and kept

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pace with those changes. At their second Conference meeting they organized a complete Home Mission organization to enlarge their work of service. The early camp meeting and quarterly conference evangelistic service were replaced by the coming of the professional evangelist, when it seemed evident that this new form of winning souls was proving more effective. In turn Christian education in its various phases was emphasized with the opening of a period of personal evangelism. The method has always been secondary to the motive in the saving of human souls.

Today the Allegheny Conference of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ is composed of a stable conscientious fellowship whose solid influence and opinion are respected and honored by both secular and religious organizations within the bounds of her territory. Her future will be even brighter than her past provided the full vision of her potential powers will once more flood the minds and hearts of her constituency and leadership.

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### ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE STATISTICAL CHART, 1907-1942

.Year	No. of Charges	Church Membership	S. S. Membership	No. of C. Bldgs.	Parsonage Bldgs.
1907	87	18,475	24,663	226	68
1912	83	20,310	32,996	208½	70
1917	90	26,886	35,205	208½	76½
1922	94	28,448	35,214	206	80
1927	94	30,151	36,551	203	88
1932	95	29,523	36,339	207	92
1937	95	31,180	33,913	200	92
1942	97	33,577	31,677	203	93

Year	Value of Church Property	Value of Parsonage Property	General Benevolences	Total Finances
1907	\$ 727,355	\$158,532	\$19,671	\$185,500
1912	\$1,031,982	\$189,100	\$18,532	\$237,987
1917	\$1,428,913	\$220,710	\$25,027	\$383,619
1922	\$1,598,114	\$308,050	\$58,742	\$449,714
1927	\$2,816,471	\$448,809	\$63,706	\$577,939
1932	\$3,085,197	\$492,559	\$38,832	\$381,758
1937	\$3,081,510	\$417,100	\$32,770	\$412,806
1942	\$3,000,600	\$426,870	\$48,943	\$502,705

#### Pastoral Support

Ministers Receiving Salaries According to Following Scale:

Year	Total Salary <sup>1</sup>	Less than \$1,000	\$1,000- \$2,000	\$2,000- \$3,000	Over \$3,000	Supt. Salary
1907	\$ 51,021	79	8	0	0	\$1,800
1912	\$ 58,881	71	11	1	0	\$2,200
1917	\$ 78,576	68	21	1	0	\$2,400
1922	\$128,950	48	33	12	1	\$4,200
1927	\$152,131	15	49	25	5	\$3,800
1932	\$129,220	31	50	12	2	\$3,000
1937	\$122,206	32	49	13	1	\$3,300
1942	\$138,152	26	59	17	0	\$3,300

1. This does not include the value of the parsonage rent.

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